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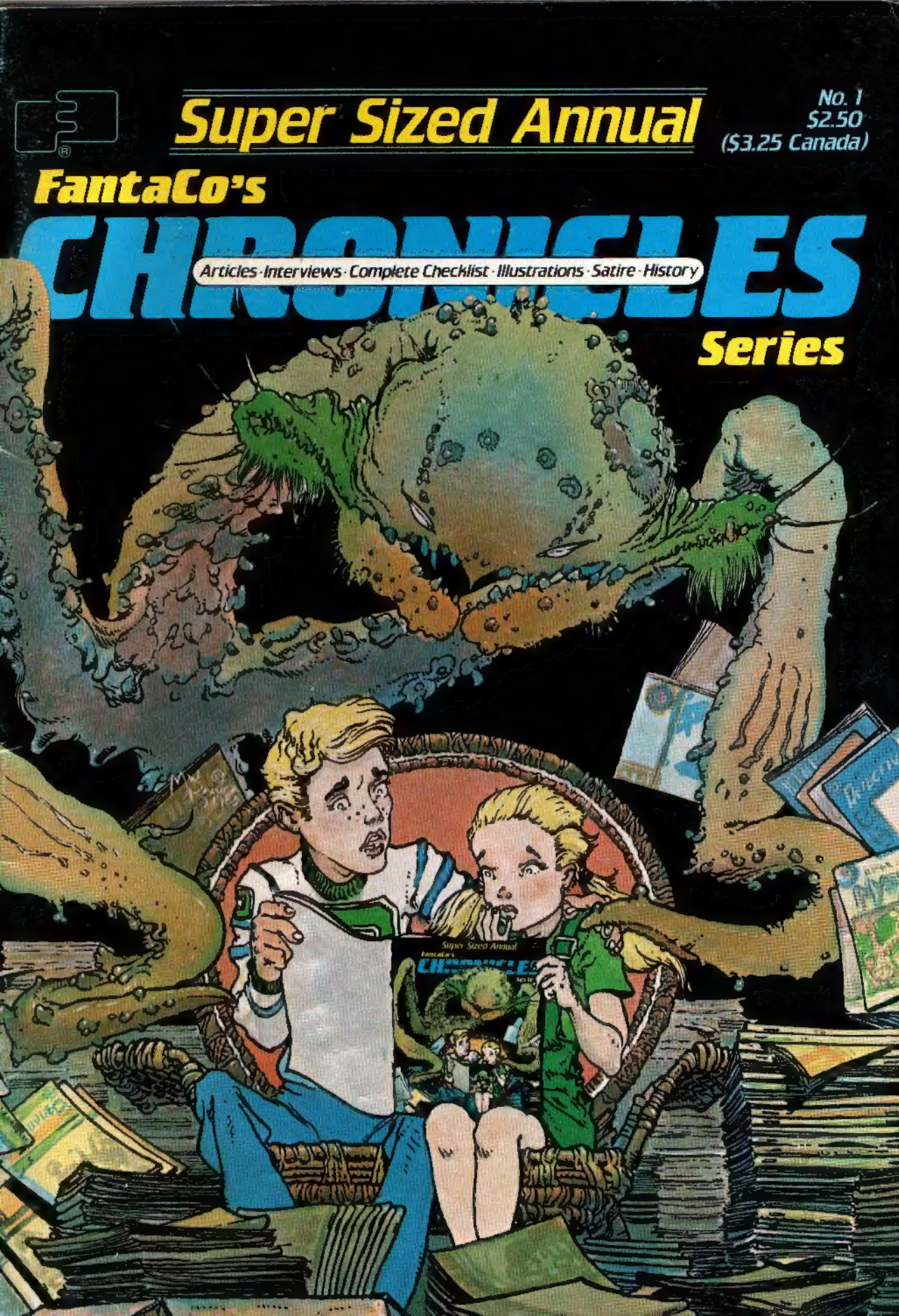

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Introduction

To anyone browsing in a shop, thanks for showing the interest to pick this up. To anyone who's actually bought it, thanks even more!

The incentive to produce *FantaCo's Chronicles Series Annual #1* arose because of the absence of such a publication in comics fandom. Checklists of individual writers' and artists' works have been compiled, and many highly informative price guides have been assembled but, to date, a systematic collection of reviews has not appeared. As a result, many newcomers to the field have had little idea where to start buying in order to build up a collection. Even seasoned campaigners wishing to sample back issues of a title they are unfamiliar with have often had to resort to trying a random sampling of issues unless they have been lucky enough to borrow some first.

As well as being a guide to buying comics, it is hoped that this work will prove entertaining to all comics' enthusiasts, although the fan who will probably benefit most will be the one who is fairly new to the field, has a small collection and at least a rudimentary knowledge of the major characters in the comics.

As is inevitable, all reviews contained herein are subject to the opinions of the individual reviewers (see Conan and King Conan for two conflicting reviews of essentially the same title). In general though, the judgments expressed are held by the majority of fans, and where they differ, this has been pointed out in the text.

Thanks must, of course, go to all those who assisted with this production, especially to Jim Constantinou and Joe Gibbons for their general help and support and to the latter for reviewing a couple of titles himself.

DAVID W.CUTLER

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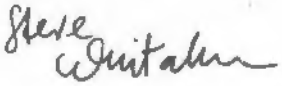


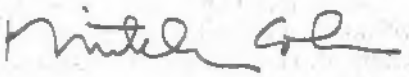
STEVE WHITAKER

A Few Words From America

Really, my hat's off to these five guys known as Slings and Arrows in their own country (England). I mean, how many people, even among those suffering most from Librarianism, would put together so much information and opinion, let alone update it completely just one year later? To tell you the truth, just organizing the old and new material into a cohesive whole exhausted me.

Brian Bolland's piece on the inside front cover was the original cover to the English fanzine *Two Decades of Comics,* which contained most of this book's text, published in 1981. It was printed in black and white.

Special thanks to Frank Plowright, who acted as our Slings and Arrows contact, to Michael William Kaluta for doing our cover, to Tom Skulan for the idea to do an infinity cover, and to Cat Yronwode (let's hear it for a newsperson who really gets the story straight!) for last minute information.



How To Use This Book

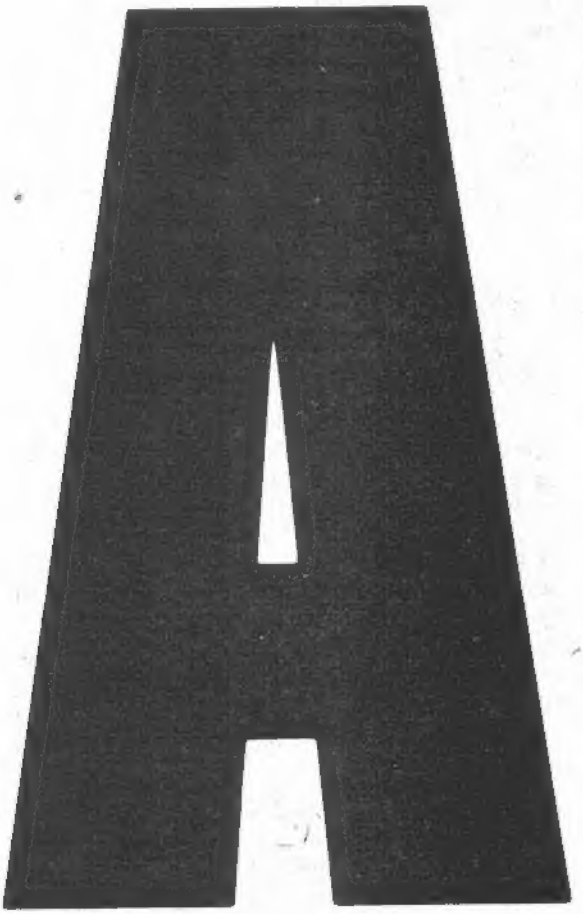
This guide attempts to review all series of interest to collectors in the comic book format. It does not, therefore, contain any details of digest comics, black and white magazines or colour magazines. In addition, romance titles are not included, and the selection of humour titles is very limited.

The bulk of the Marvel and DC output has been included, as has the super-hero output from the other companies. Titles not falling into these categories are only selectively listed. Although some of the comics have been in production since the 1930s, the reviews only apply to issues published between November 1961 and October 1982 inclusive. Any title still running in October 1982 has a plus sign after the number of issue that have so far appeared.

Comic series are reviewed alphabetically, irrespective of company, and according to the title under which they appeared. Therefore, although the Guardians of the Galaxy effectively had their own title, the review appears under *Marvel Presents*. When a series changes title, it is treated as two separate series. The only exceptions to this are Luke Cage's title (which can be found under *Power Man*), and *Total War* (which is included with *M.A.R.S. Patrol*).

Immediately beneath each comic series' title is the name of the publishing company, the dates of the title's production, the number of issues, and any annuals or giant-size issues outside the numerical sequence. If a number appears in brackets before the dates, then the series begins with that number, although the issues total is the number that appeared on the final or October 1982 issue and, therefore, includes issues produced under another title. When a series is cancelled and later revived, the last issue prior to cancellation is noted in brackets after the date of cancellation. If two or more series with identical titles have been produced by the same company, they are chronologically labelled 1,2, etc., in brackets after their titles. It should be noted that a reprint issue is never recommended if a review of the original appears in this guide. Key issues are listed after each review. The reviewer's initials appear at the end of each listing.

Both the opinions expressed in the text and the choice of recommended issues may be attributed entirely to the opinion whose initials appear beneath the review. The recommended issues have been selected relative to the standards attained by comics in general, and not with respect to their own particular title. In order that you can judge how your tastes correspond with those of the reviewers, each of us has picked our ten favourite series or runs of issues, and these can be found in Appendix II on page 97 of this book.



Action

DC From June 1938; 536 issues +

An appropriate title to begin with, as it started the whole super-hero culture with Superman's debut in issue 1. The format mainly used has been a lead Superman feature with a back-up. Action in the 1960s was typical of the comics that editor Mort Weisinger produced. They had all the characteristics that constitute the Superman legend: imaginary stories, kryptonite (of all hues and colours), loss of powers, villains from the Phantom Zone, the bottle city of Kandor and the problem of keeping his identity a secret. The back-up strip for most of these issues was Supergirl, who had more or less the same adventures as her cousin. The Legion of Superheroes took his place in 377-392 and made the comic worth reading. Action was eventually entirely turned over to Superman and when Julian Schwartz became editor, a new direction began. Most distinctive was the emergence of Clark Kent as a major character. Cary Bates became the main writer and turned the comic into an enjoyable and entertaining title. Though never fantastic, it's had a few gems, e.g. "The Immortal Superman" (385-387), "The Return of Jonathan Kent" (507-508) and "Lex Luthor Reforms" (510-512), all written by Bates. Marv Wolfman, now Action's regular writer, has been doing a reasonable job, with his Brainiac saga in 528-530 standing out. It must also be mentioned that a major factor in the success of Action since the mid-1960s has been the outstanding artwork of Curt Swan. Back-up strips have included Congorilla in 258-261, Metamorpho in 413-418 and the Human Target, Green Arrow and Atom were other back-ups in the 1970s. Recent alternating back-ups have been Aquaman, Air Wave and Atom.

Key Issues: *309, 318, 319, 340, 351-354, 361-366, 377-397, 400-402, 480-484, 490, 491, 500, 507, 508, 510-512, 528-530.* ***HY***

Adventure

DC December 1935 to February 1982; 492 issues+

The star of Adventure during the early 1960s was Superboy, with his back-up strip Tales of the Bizarro World, featuring the many imperfect doubles of Superman and his friends and their humourous antics.

The Legion of Super-Heroes

300-380 They started off as guest stars, graduated to a back-up strip with 300, and the largest super team in comics had become the only feature by 306. Their earlier stories were often silly with unimpressive art, but the series improved gradually. Curt Swan became regular artist with 340 and a 13-year-old Jim Shooter began writing the stories from 346. He introduced the Fatal Five (352-353) and Mordru (369-370), the Legion's most durable villains, and wrote several classic stories such as "The Outlawed Legionnaires" (359-360) and "The Circle of Death" 367), and they're only the tip of the iceberg. Shooter himself says that this is the best series he's ever written. The reason for the huge popularity of the Legion would seem to be the diversity of its members, ranging from the 'humourous' Bouncing Boy and Matter Eater Lad to the more complex and powerful Ultra Boy and Element Lad. After 380, the Legion moved to Action.

Supergirl

381-424 The Maid of Steel went through three types of story here. The first had her in her usual light adventures, carrying on from her series in Action. From 397 Mike Sekowsky edited the title, and Supergirl began her most impressive stories ever. Though never renowned for his art, Sekowsky was one of DC's better writer/editors. He gave Supergirl new problems, like fading super powers, an interesting personal life, a good supporting cast and a whole new wardrobe of costumes designed by readers. From 411 Supergirl's adventures were rather plain super-hero stories.

Adventure 425-428 featured numerous short series including Capt Fear, the Adventure Club and Vigilante.

Black Orchid

428-430 A well-produced series about a mysterious, super-powered heroine whose secret identity and origin were never revealed. Scripting was by Sheldon Mayer and Tony DeZuniga handled the art.

The Spectre

431-440 This series was the cause of much discussion in fandom due to the unusual ways scripter Mike Fleisher had the Spectre dispose of villains. One group was turned into wood and run through an electric buzz saw. Art was by Jim Aparo.

Aquaman

441-452 After a successful back-up strip in 435-437 by Paul Levitz and Mike Grell, Aquaman became the cover feature. It was an enjoyable series under Levitz, David Michelinie and Jim Aparo, leading to Aquaman's own title being revived. 452 saw the pointless death of Aquababy.

Superboy

453-458 A rather average series of stories that were nevertheless well enough received to start up another Superboy title after his first comic had been usurped by the Legion of Super-Heroes.

From 413 back-up strips were a regular feature of Adventure. The best were Zatanna in 413-415 by Len Wein and Gray Morrow, Capt Fear by Steve Skeates and Alex Nino in 42k5-427, 429 and 432-433, various people handling a Seven Soldiers of Victory story in 438-443 and the Martian Manhunter by Denny O'Neil and Mike Nasser in 449-451. Adventure became a dollar comic from 459-466 and featured Flash, Wonder Woman and Deadman among others, but the best features were the New Gods in 459 and 460, and the Justice Society of America by Paul Levitz and Joe Staton in 461-466. 467-478 introduced a new super-hero, Starman by Levitz and Steve Ditko and featured Plastic Man by Marty Pasko and Joe Staton, who produced his best work since E-Man. Aquaman joined them from 475.

Dial H for Hero

479-490 Originally featuring Robby Reed, Dial H for Hero had run in House of Mystery during the 1960s. Marv Wolfman adapted the idea here, with a boy and a girl finding magic dials that would transform them into a different super-hero every time they dialed the word 'hero.' All the heroes and villains were designed by readers and were featured in short and simplistic stories. The feature is currently the back-up strip in Superboy.

Adventure was cancelled with 490, but later revived as a 100-page digest-sized comic containing one new story and numerous reprints.

Key Issues: *340-380, 397-409, 428-430, 459-466.* ***HY***

Adventures Into The Unknown

ACG Fall 1948 to August 1967; 174 issues

On its debut, this comic became the first continuing horror anthology comic, although the arrival of the comics code in the mid-1950s ensured that the stories were toned down. However, ACG mystery stories were usually of a much higher standard than those produced by other companies, making it worth your while to sample at least one issue. A super-hero, Nemesis, was featured in 154-170. He had been returned from the dead as a ghost in order to avenge his death at the hands of gangsters in a very good origin story, but quality soon slipped. The tongue in cheek scripts of Richard 'Shane O'Shea' Hughes worked far better on Herbie than here (not that they went quite as far out as Herbie), and the art by Pete Costanza and Chic Stone never transcended mediocre.

Adventures on the Planet of the Apes

MARVEL October 1975 to December 1976; 11 issues

This reprinted stories from the Planet of the Apes magazine in colour. Nothing particularly impressive here. If you're an Apes fanatic, the black and white originals are far better value.

FP

Alarming Adventures

HARVEY October 1962 to February 1963; 3 issues

In the early '60s many companies launched Fantasy/Horror/Suspense anthology titles. Harvey's effort never got the chance to degenerate like many and this run is memorable, sporting intelligent stories and beautiful art from the likes of Williamson, Crandall and Powell.

Key Issues: *1-3.* ***SW***

All-American Men of War

DC September 1952 to October 1976; 117 issues

Formerly All-American Western, this was an average war comic with fairly decent stories during the '60s. Its regular feature was either Johnny Cloud (who later joined the Losers) or Balloon Buster.

HY

All Out War

DC September 1979 to July 1980; 6 issues

Another average war comic from DC, this time in the Dollar Comic format. Its main feature was the Viking Commando, a true Viking who avoided Valhalla and spent his time helping the Allied cause against the Nazis in the usual Viking way.

HY

All Star

DC Summer 1940 to March 1951 (57); February 1976 to October 1978; 74 issues

Probably the most requested revival of all time was that of the Justice Society's book. The original super team of the '40s had been revived as early as 1964 in the JLA, but it wasn't until 1976 that DC were confident enough to restore the Earth 2 super team to their old title. The first few issues were by Gerry Conway with art by Ric Estrada and Keith Giffen, although they were indistinguishable under Wally Wood inks. Conway introduced new characters, and updated others but failed in an attempt to imitate the style of the '40s stories. Paul Levitz took over with 62, and turned the title into one of the best on a crowded market, with well-defined characters and clever plots, lapsing only with a poor final issue. Joe Staton drew the title, to which he seemed well suited, from 66. The series continued in Adventure 461-466, and DC Special 29 related the origin of the Justice Society.

Key Issues: *62, 63, 68-73.* ***FP***

All-Star Squadron

DC From September 1981; 14 issues +; 1 Annual 1982

Considering that it was Roy Thomas' ambition to write DC's golden age heroes since he entered comics, this isn't very impressive. A convoluted plot continued from a preview in JLA 193 through the first 3 issues, followed by a silly story explaining why the JSA couldn't win the war on their own. Things have improved slightly since, and the period atmosphere seems authentic, but the quality of the series as a whole can be judged by the fact that the best 2 issues (8 & 9) featured the induction of one of DC's most mundane heroes, Steel.
FP

All Star Western

DC September 1970 to May 1972; 11 issues

The second series to bear this name—the first ended prior to the period covered here—lasted 11 issues before a title change to Weird Western. 4 new strips were created for the book, which was padded out with reprints, the most notable of which was Batlash. Of the new series, Billy the Kid and Outlaw were poor, but El Diablo, crippled, yet able to avenge evil when possessed by an Indian spirit, was a nice strip with some lovely Gray Morrow art. However, it was the scarred bounty hunter, Jonah Hex, who first appeared in issue 10, who was to prove the greatest success, with some superbly inventive stories stemming from his unconventional character.
Key Issues: *2, 10, 11.* ***FP***

Amazing Adult Fantasy

MARVEL (7) December 1961 to July 1962; 14 issues

The first 6 issues of "the magazine that respects your intelligence" were titled Amazing Adventures. This classic anthology title differs from Marvel's other early '60s fare in that it featured the Stan Lee/Steve Ditko team exclusively. This plus the illustrated contents page make each issue a pleasure to read. You owe it to yourself to try at least 1 issue, and any issue is representative of the general quality. The title changed to Amazing Fantasy with issue 15.
SW

Amazing Adventures (1)

MARVEL August 1970 to November 1976; 39 issues

Inhumans

1-10 The Inhumans, a race of humans genetically altered by the Kree generations ago, finally gained their own series after having been supporting characters for many years. The first 2 issues were very ordinary and the last 2 tedious but 5-8 (Thomas/Adams) produced a dramatic storyline which had connections with the Kree-Skrull war in the Avengers.

Black Widow

1-8 Another long-time supporting character who was eventually granted her own series, it made a change to see the defected Russian super-spy fighting some non-super-powered villains and to get a view of her life out of costume. These factors apart, the stories lacked depth and inspiration, although 5 (the best) was fairly acceptable.

Beast

11-17 The first charter member of the X-Men to leave the group permanently broke away into his own series and almost immediately mutated to become far more beast-like than he ever was before. This 6-issue run by Englehart and Sutton had marvelous plotting and subplotting, superb use of all the supporting characters and featured one of the most dramatic and total defeats of a super villain in 13. 17 is a reprint, but the series concluded in Hulk 161.

War of the Worlds

18-39 Based on concepts from H.G. Wells' novel, this feature related the adventures of Killraven (a trained gladiatorial fighter with minor psychic powers) and his followers in the 21st century, several years after the Martians had returned and successfully conquered Earth. Although this is held in high regard by fandom, I feel that it is very overrated; the character development and dialogue are marvellously handled by McGregor, but often at the expense of a plot. An overall view tends to produce a feeling of lack of direction.

For an example of an original and unconventional comic, issues 27 on are worth buying. McGregor and Russell began to put things together here, but do watch out for the reprint (30) and fill-ins (33, 38).
Key Issues: *11-16.* ***APS***

Amazing Adventures (2)

MARVEL December 1979 to January 1981; 14 issues

This series reprinted the first 8 issues of the original X-Men by Lee and Kirby. It differed from the usual Marvel reprints because no pages were cut. Definitely worth getting if you can't afford the originals.
FP

Amazing Fantasy

MARVEL (15) August 1962; 15 issues

In an attempt to revivify the flagging Amazing Adult Fantasy, writer Stan Lee decided to try a change of direction for its final issue. As well as the minor title change, he introduced a new and different super-hero, a super-hero with problems, on the principle that he had nothing to lose if the concept was a flop. So in place of 2 of the usual battery of short/weird stories was an extra-long, 11-page extravaganza featuring Spider-Man.
APS

Angel and the Ape

DC December 1968 to December 1969; 7 issues

This was a humour series which featured Private Investigators Angel O'Day and her gorilla partner Sam Simeon. The cases they got involved them in the usual detection adventures.

An interesting subplot involved the part-time job Sam had, a comic strip artist for an editor named Stan Bragg, who went around dressed in a Stars and Stripes costume and who eventually goes potty! The final issue was titled Meet Angel.
HY

Anthro

DC August 1968 to August 1969; 6 issues

This wasn't the usual prehistoric/jungle series that it appeared to be. It was a well-written, witty account of a Stone-age family, the main character being Anthro, the eldest son. Howie Post wrote and drew the strip and his art suited the setting perfectly. If you want to read something different, try this comic.
***Key Issues:** 1-6. HY*

Aquaman

DC February 1962 to April 1971 (56); September 1977 to September 1978; 63 issues

After being around for a couple of decades, Aquaman finally got his own title. It quickly became an entertaining series under writer Bob Haney and artist Nick Cardy. Aquaman soon became King of Atlantis, took a queen, Mera, from another dimension, and had a son, Aquababy. The series continued in an average way until issue 40 when Dick Giordano became editor. He brought Steve Skeates and Jim Aparo with him and they produced a multi-part saga involving Aquaman's quest for a kidnapped Mera (40-46). Issues 50-52 contained Deadman back-up strips by Neal Adams that tied into the continuity of the Aquaman series. The series was cancelled, but was revived in 1977 after a successful run in Adventure. This new series by David Michelinie and Jim Aparo, though not quite as good as the original run, was well handled. The most interesting development was the murder of Aquababy by the Black Manta. The title was again cancelled after 7 issues, although it certainly deserved to be kept on the stands. One of the more enjoyable DC titles.
HY

Arak

DC From September 1981; 14 issues +

A comic set in the Dark Ages starring a Red Indian, written by Roy Thomas. It's a nice setting, but there's nothing interesting enough to distinguish Arak from the majority of Sword and Sorcery series. Viking Prince by Robert Kanigher and Jan Duursema has been the back-up strip since issue 8.
HY

Army at War

DC November 1978; 1 issue

Despite the banner proclaiming "an exciting new idea" across the cover, this was an ordinary war anthology book that didn't differ much in quality from other such books. It only lasted one issue due to the DC implosion.
FP

Astonishing Tales

MARVEL August 1970 to July 1976; 36 issues

Doctor Doom

1-8 Roy Thomas and Wally Wood handled the first 4 issues and did a creditable job on a difficult concept—giving the standard "hero with problems" treatment to a villain. Larry Lieber and George Tuska "crafted issues 5 and 6, but the last 2 issues were fairly well scripted by Gerry Conway.

Ka-Zar

1-20 This strip simply never managed to get on an even keel, although many individual issues make for good reading. A particularly good story appears in 12 and 13 by Thomas and Wein, in which the Man-Thing guest starred and Ka-Zar managed to get away from his Tarzan clone character.

It, The Living Colossus

21-24 An awful series from Isabella and Ayers. It was a reworking of one of Marvel's many pre-1962 monsters. Avoid it.

Deathlok the Demolisher

25-28, 30-36 One of those oddities that Marvel throw out every now and then, a character who is completely outside the Marvel mould. Set in 1990, Deathlok was an army colonel who died and was then rebuilt as a cyborg. He then revolted against his masters and went in search of his humanity in a well-portrayed future of intrigue and decay. Rich Buckler (whose concept it was) did some of his finest art and plotting in these stories, with some help from Doug Moench and Bill Mantlo.
***Key Issues:** 1-4, 12-13, 25-28, 30-36. DWC*

Atom

DC July 1962 to September 1968; 38 issues

Using a white dwarf star fragment scientist Ray Palmer developed a method of shrinking himself down from his 6 foot to sub-microscopic size. After a successful run in Showcase, the Atom was awarded his own title. Probably editor Julie Schwartz's most "scientific" character, the Atom's adventures were mainly science fiction based with a human/detective feel about them. Very few super-villains turned up, though near the end of the series the stories did become more super-hero oriented and were handled quite well. Worth mentioning are the "Time Pool" stories that appeared in a number of issues where the mighty mite travelled back in time and met historical figures such as Jules Verne and Edgar Allen Poe. With the exception of the last issue, all the stories were written by Gardner Fox and drawn by Gil Kane, so no artistic complaints here. Although never a really exciting title, it's still worth reading. With issue 39, the title became Atom and Hawkman.
***Key Issues:** 28-37. HY*

Atom and Hawkman

DC (39) November 1968 to November 1969; 45 issues

Merging their individual books was a badly timed attempt by DC to keep the 2 characters in print; basically because all the split books seemed to have disappeared a couple of years beforehand. This title occasionally featured separate stories of the 2 characters and occasionally team-ups. Hawkman and Atom always meshed well in team-ups and it's sad that the mag only survived 7 issues. Distinguished and unusual art graced most issues and O'Neil and Fox came up with some good scripts too, notably Fox's "Panic Button" stories in 40-41. Good stuff.

Key Issues: *40-41. SW*

Avengers

MARVEL From September 1963; 224 issues +; 11 Annuals 1967-1969, 1971, 1972, 1976-1979, 1981, 1982 5 GS August 1974 to August 1975

Of Marvel's super-hero series, this is aguably the best. Lapses from quality have been rare and short lived (apart from a deplorable 1981) and the diversity of powers and personalities in a constantly shifting roster —nearly all of Marvel's major characters have been or guest starred with the Avengers—make the team just as adaptable to a plot set in Olympus (98-100), the future (23-24), Vietnam (130) or New York. The first 34 issues were written by Stan Lee in his inimitable old style and illustrated by Jack Kirby (1-8) and Don Heck (9 on). Roy Thomas became scripter with 35 and after a shaky start he was teamed with John Buscema, and the comic got better and better. Thomas peaked with one of the finest ever comic runs (69-86) and followed that with the epic Kree/Skrull war sequence (89-97), also considered by many to be a classic. His finest individual moment was the creation of the Vision in 57. After the Olympus trilogy, illustrated by Barry Smith, and a Sentinels tale, Steve Englehart assumed the scripting, starting with 105. He also took time to hit his stride, but after the Avengers/Defenders crossover (115-118) he began producing winners until he left with 151. His best efforts were Giant Size issues 2 (with one of the best death scenes ever done in comics) and 3. Jim Shooter followed a patchy Gerry Conway period with some excellent continued tales, culminating in the 10-part Michael saga (167, 168, 170-177), Eagle award winner for the best continued story in 1978. 178-210 saw art by John Byrne and George Perez (until 202) and a variety of people writing the title, the most regular being David Michelinie. They turned out the occasional fine story among a mass of mundanity. Jim Shooter once again became writer with 211 but his work hasn't matched his earlier quality, and his policy of returning to the oldest Avengers (Captain America, Wasp, Iron Man and Thor) with the occasional guest star doesn't seem to have been well received anywhere other than the letters page. Perhaps new member She-Hulk and the returned Hawkeye will change things. The best annuals are 7, with script and art by Jim Starlin, who used the comic to conclude his Warlock storyline, and 10 by Chris Claremount and Mike Golden, which puts the current regular issues to shame.

Key Issues: *28, 57, 58, 69-86, 100, 116-123, 129-135, 137-144, 147-151, 158-162, 164-168, 170-177, 194-196, Annuals 1, 2, 7, & 10. GS 1-4.* ***FP***

CHARACTER © 1983 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

Barbarians

ATLAS June 1975; 1 issue

Intended as a showcase title for barbarian characters, the only issue featured a below average Iron Jaw tale and the first chapter of Andrax, created by Rolf Kauka, premiere German comics scripter. It was slightly better than the lead story.
FP

Batlash

DC November 1968 to November 1969, 7 issues

DC have always put more thought into their western series than other companies and before the coming of Jonah Hex, Batlash was the best. Premiered in Showcase 76, he was a fast gun with an appreciation of the finer things in life and a flower in his hat. A combination of humour, good plotting by Aragones and O'Neil and superb art from the underrated Nick Cardy make this a must for any collector, especially as prices remain reasonable.
Key Issues: *1-7* ***FP***

Batman

DC From Spring 1940; 352 issues +; 8 Annuals 1961-1964, 1982, 1 Spectacular 1978

The Batman tales in the early 1960s were really quite silly, featuring concepts totally unsuited to Batman such as aliens, monsters, Bat-Mite and Bat-Hound. Definitely not the Batman Bob Kane and Bill Finger had in mind when they created him. The hero was rescued by editor Julius Schwartz who gave Batman a "new look" from 164. Detection was now the theme of the title with costumed villains very much in the background. In 1966 the campy and highly successful Batman TV series started and greatly increased the sales of the comic. He was now more popular than ever but his stories, thankfully, didn't follow the style of the TV series, though a lot of Bat-gadgets did start turning up. Although this was a successful period for Batman, the book remained extremely boring. With the end of the TV series, Batman's sales began to drop, so another new direction was needed. Thankfully Denny O'Neil and Neal Adams came along in the late '60s and gave us the true Batman – the creature of the night! Robin left to go to college and the last traces of the camp era disappeared. Their stories featured good adversaries such as Ras Al Ghul in 243-244 and the Joker in 251, the issue that brought back the Joker as he was first conceived: a crazed, sadistic lunatic. For the most memorable Batman comic of the time, read 237. It featured Batman and Robin in a 25-page story entitled "Night of the Reaper" by Denny O'Neil and Adams. After that things were pretty dull until recently, although stories guest starring the Shadow in 253 and 259 were interesting. Issue 300 offered a possbile future for the Batman family and after that, writers Wein and Wolfman developed an interesting relationship between Batman and Catwoman. Wolfman's 'Lazarus Affair' story in 332-335 is well worth looking at. Dick Giordano became editor of the title with 337, and the quality shot up. Gerry Conway started writing above average stories and Gene Colan has proven himself a perfect Batman artist. Giordano also introduced continuity between this and Batman's other title, Detective, alternating sub-plots and continuing stories. By far the best of the annuals and spectaculars are the 1978 (featuring work by O'Neil, Rogers, Golden and Nasser) and the 1982 annual with a full-length story written by Mike Barr with unusual art from Trever Von Eeden. And no, I don't know how DC managed to fit the first seven annuals into four years.
Key Issues: *219, 232, 234, 237, 242-245, 251, 255, 300, 332-335, 345, 347, 349-351; Annual 8; 1978 Spectacular*
HY

Batman Family

DC October 1975 to November 1978, 20 issues

This giant-size title featured Robin and Batgirl team-ups backed up by reprints of Batman stories from the '40s and '50s. With issue 11, it went to an all new format with solo Batgirl and Robin tales, but these stories remained bland throughout their run. The Man-Bat stories which commenced in the first all new issue were the definitive treatment of this character and were graced with some particularly fine artists, including Rogers, Austin, Chaykin and Golden. With issue 17 the title went dollar size and although Man-Bat declined quickly, the Batman stories were all very good; issues 18-20 are recommended as they carry some of the best

work from Denny O'Neil and David V. Reed and all carry Mike Golden art.
Key Issues:** 11, 12, 14-16, 18-20.* ***DWC

Battle Classics

DC October 1978; 1 issue

Due to the DC implosion, this comic only lasted one issue. It reprinted a teaming of DC's main war heroes, including Sgt Rock, Johnny Cloud, Jeb Stuart from the Haunted Tank and Mlle Marie.
HY

Battlestar Galactica

MARVEL March 1979 to January 1981; 23 issues

Early issues adapted the TV series in a somewhat lethargic fashion. As is always the way, just as the book had begun to pick up and had gained a permanent creative team, it was cancelled. All the later issues with Walt Simonson art and story make for good reading, though it was never an outstanding book.
Key Issues:** 19, 20, 22, 23.* ***DWC

Beowulf

DC May 1975 to March 1976; 6 issues

Another of the mid-'70s DC barbarian strips. I find it very hard to read American idioms such as "I owe him one!" or "In a pig's eye it is!" coming from the mouth of a character from popular European folklore. Ricardo Villamonte's artistry is similarly inconsistent but, on the whole, passable. Result: forgettable.
SW

Beware

MARVEL March 1973 to May 1974; 8 issues

This all-reprint title contained 1950s weird/horror stories. The title changed to Tomb of Darkness from issue 9 onwards.
APS

Bionic Woman

CHARLTON October 1977 to June 1978; 5 issues

Charlton dutifully made sure that Jamie Sommers' strip adventures were at least as dire as those of her bionic counterpart, Steve "$6,000,000 Man" Austin's. To be avoided, conscientiously.
SW

Black Cat

HARVEY July 1946 to April 1963; 65 issues

Although the pre-1961 issues were a nice mix of good girl art and bondage (which earned the title a mention in "Seduction of the Innocent") the last years were very poor. The heroine was a movie star who dressed up in a skimpy costume and ran around chasing various cliched plots. Don't bother.
DWC

Black Goliath

MARVEL February 1976 to November 1976; 5 issues

The third person to bear the identity of Goliath was Bill Foster, a Stark technician. He was awarded his own title during a period of expansion and it was cancelled during a period of recession. This comic serves as a good yardstick for judging others, being neither very good, nor shamefully bad.
FP

Blackhawk

DC August 1941 to November 1968 (243); February 1976 to February 1977 (250); From October 1982; 251 issues +

DC inherited this series from Quality and it was a series you either loved or hated, but they must have had something going for them, as their book was published throughout the '40s, '50s, and '60s (and no other team managed that). The Blackhawks were an international group of ace pilots. Their stories could encompass pure adventure, alien creatures, science-fiction or super-powered costumed villains. Nothing seemed beyond their scope. In issues 230-241 the "magnificent 7" became super-heroes, but this was not a very successful series and the book was cancelled. It was revived in 1976, this time with the Blackhawks as mercenaries. There were a few interesting developments during their new look, but on the whole it bored me to death. The current revival sets the series during World War II, which is more in line with the original concept. Scripting is by Mark Evanier and art is by Dan Speigle. All I want to know is why?
HY

Black Hole

WESTERN From March 1980, 6 issues +

A lukewarm adaptation of the movie (1-3) and beyond. Easily the most tedious title reviewed in this book.
DWG

Black Lightning

DC April 1977 to October 1978; 11 issues

The man with the force field was DC's attempt to portray a modern black super-hero. Created by Tony Isabella, the series had Black Lightning battling the "100," a criminal organisation run by Tobias Whale. Although nice, there's nothing really outstanding here. The series was cancelled in the DC implosion and issue 11 had a back-up story starring the Ray.
HY

Black Magic

DC November 1973 to May 1975; 9 issues

This was a reprint series that featured pre-comics code horror stories by Joe Simon and Jack Kirby. A lot of these are better than the mystery stuff done these days. The dated art style gives the stories an eerie feel.
HY

Black Panther

MARVEL January 1977 to May 1979; 15 issues

What can one say about Jack Kirby's later Marvel work? Where McGregor's T'Challa was a man living in an only too real world, Kirby's version of his own creation was surrounded by ancient frogs, aliens and midgets. Ed Hannigan produced 2 nice last issues, but the series will be remembered for Kirby.
DWG

Blade Runner

MARVEL October 1982 to November 1982; 2 issues

A lacklustre adaptation of the movie, which in turn adapted Phillip K. Dick's novel 'Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?' The comic was scripted by Archie Goodwin with art by Al Williamson and Carlos Garzon. The whole adaptation is also available in 1 complete issue, Marvel Super Special 22. That issue also contains stills from the film.
FP

Blazing Battle Tales

ATLAS July 1975; 1 issue

A tedious book that differs from myriad other war titles only by the fact that it contained the Atlas trademark of excessive explicitly portrayed violence.
FP

Blitzkrieg

DC February 1976 to October 1976; 5 issues

An attempt to show World War II through the enemy's eyes, which never really lived up to its expectations. DC's top war story writer Robert Kanigher scripted and the art was handled by Ric Estrada, whose work, though not exceptional, suited the series.
HY

Blue Beetle (1)

CHARLTON June 1964 to April 1965; 5 issues; (50) July 1965 to December 1965; 53 issues

The Blue Beetle had been a relatively successful hero for Charlton in the '50s. For this revival Dan Garrett was given a new origin by writer Joe Gill and some truly abysmal art by Bill Fracchio and Tony Tallarico. For some reason the series took over the numbering of Unusual Tales halfway through its run. This is the kind of comic that makes you wonder whether comic burning sessions aren't a good idea after all.
FP

Blue Beetle (2)

CHARLTON June 1967 to December 1967; 5 issues

This is one of the best books that Charlton ever produced and the best post-Marvel work that Steve Ditko did. Drawing from the somewhat insipid early '60s character, Ditko wove an excellent mini-series around the disappearance of the original Blue Beetle and the mystery of the new Beetle's background. Though the book lacked the shadowy depth of Spider-Man, there is an equal depth of characterisation and the book is sadly underrated. The back-up was the Questions—a Creeper/Spirit character—an excellent early vehicle for Ditko's right-wing views and makes good reading in itself.
***Key Issues:** 1-5. DWC*

Bomba the Jungle Boy

DC October 1967 to October 1968; 7 issues

Based on a TV series, this was a worthy try at the jungle hero theme. Following a poor start the series steadily improved under the talents of Denny O'Neil and Jack Sparling. Nothing great here.
HY

Boris Karloff Tales of Mystery

GOLD KEY October 1962 to February 1980; 97 issues

This comic was titled Boris Karloff Thriller for the first 2 issues, which were 80-page giants. It was also the first Gold Key anthology title, and the early issues contain some fine artwork. You can't go wrong with the likes of Orlando, Torres, McWilliams, Wood, Williamson and Crandall. The stories are competent too, if uncredited. After the first 20 or so issues, the quality dropped, and the '70s trend of Spanish artists at Gold Key meant that if you've seen one '70s issues, you've seen them all.
SW

Boy Commandos

DC October 1973 to December 1973; 2 issues

Reprints of an early Simon/Kirby strip from the '40s in which the heroes were a group of international children (no girls) who fight the Nazis. As is usual with Simon and Kirby books, the stories rise above the weak concept to become enjoyable reading.
***Key Issues:** 1, 2. DWC*

Brain Boy

DELL June 1962 to November 1963; 6 issues

The adventures of teenager Matt Price, who had potent mental powers, including telepathy, telekenesis and auto suggestion. Matt is used as an agent by a government undercover agency and wages a secret war on other, less moral, espers. The first issue is drawn by Gil Kane, although the inker does his best to disguise the fact. An interesting but lacklustre series.
SW

Brave and the Bold

DC From September 1955; 191 issues +; 1 Special 1978

This started off as a showcase title featuring such concepts as the JLA (28-30 were their first appearance) and Hawkman in 34-36 and 42-44. Issue 50 was the first team-up and 54 saw the conception of the Teen Titans. 57 was the first appearance of Metamorpho and 61 and 62 featured Starman and the Black Canary by Gardner

Fox and Murphy Anderson. The title then became a team-up book for Batman (with a few interruptions). The early Batman team-ups were quite well done, but nothing really special until Neal Adams took over the art. His Brave and Bold contributions are by far the best run the title ever produced. With Adams gone Nick Cardy and later Jim Aparo took over and with writer Bob Haney produced some really interesting, entertaining and tightly plotted stories. It really was amazing how much Haney could fit into a 17-page story. The mag soon fell into a rut, from which it has only recently begun to recover, although 167 by Marv Wolfman and Dave Cockrum, teaming Batman and the Blackhawks during World War II was an interesting issue. More recently Alan Brennert has written some excellent stories, 178 with the Creeper, 181 ending with the story of the Hawk and the Dove, and 182 with the Earth 2 Robin. The Metal Men finally discover what happened to Nameless in 187. Nemesis, a fairly well produced thriller series by Cary Burkett and Dan Spiegle has been the back-up strip since 1980. The 1978 Special teamed Batman, Deadman and Sgt. Rock.
Key Issues: *28-30, 34-36, 42-44, 57, 58, 61, 62, 65, 79-103, 167, 178, 181, 182.* ***HY***

Brothers of the Spear

GOLD KEY June 1972 to February 1976; 17 issues

The Russ Manning created strip that had been the regular back-up strip in Tarzan since 1952 finally moved into its own title when Gold Key lost the rights to publish Tarzan. Unfortunately the adventures of the two young primitives did nothing more than prove that they were back-up material through and through.
SW

The Brute

ATLAS February 1975 to July 1975; 3 issues

The Brute was Atlas' answer to the Hulk: A frozen caveman revived in the '70s and prone to mindless violent rampages through civilisation. Badly written and (with the exception of a lovely cover on issue 1) badly drawn.
FP

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Captain Action

DC November 1968 to July 1969; 5 issues

DC beat Marvel by a decade in adapting a toy into one of their comics, when Ideal's Captain Action became embedded in the DC universe. Archeologist Prof. Clive Arno found an unusual ancient ruin with some coins which, when held, gave the holder the power of the God portrayed on the coin. Prof. Arno became Captain Action, and his son, Action Boy. The only fault with the series was the stupid names and costumes. The creative talents were Jim Shooter and Gil Kane (plots) and art by Wally Wood and Kane. This really was an exciting and powerful series that should have lasted more than 5 issues.
Key Issues: *1-5. HY*

Captain America

MARVEL (100) From April 1968; 274 issues +; 6 Annuals 1971, 1972, 1976, 1977, 1981, 1982; 1 GS 1975

The numbering follows on from Tales of Suspense. This series continues in exactly the same rut which Tales of Suspense began. The first 40 odd issues, with the exception of 109-120, are utterly and completely uninspired. The first 5 issues of this life-saving interlude, partly by Steranko, are good although Avengers 106-108 are really necessary in order to understand what was going on. 114-120 feature the Red Skull, Cosmic Cube and the introduction of the Falcon in a fairly ingenious storyline. The quality picked up slightly after 140, but it was left to Steve Englehart to pull the book up from the depths. Englehart succeeded because he made Captain America a symbol of America instead of just another guy in a costume. Kirby then picked up the reins and the less said about his tenure the better. In 215-225, a reprint, a fill-in and 5 writers in 11 issues spoilt a promising sequence wherein Steve Rogers tried to discover what had happened in his life before he became Captain America. Since then the book has been plagued by guest scripters and fill-ins (although three of these, in 258-260, are quite commendable). The only semblances of stability have been provided by an all too brief stint from Roger Stern and John Byrne in 247-255 and, currently by Marc DeMatteis. He slowly seems to be coming to grips with the strip and has thrown out odd issues (264, 267, 270) which verge on excellence.
Key Issues: *110-113, 153-167, 169-183, 248, 250, 253, 254. APS*

Captain Atom

CHARLTON (78) December 1965 to December 1967, 89 issues

The triumphant return of Charlton's space-age hero in his own title, after 3 issues of reprints in Strange Suspense Stories (from which the numbering continues) had signalled the demand for new material. The first 6 stories feature the original Captain Atom in all his nuclear splendour, then, in 84, his powers are drastically reduced and his costume was altered in order that he more readily fit the Charlton 'Action Heroes' line. In the meantime, a female sidekick, Nightshade, and an arch-villain, the Ghost, joined Gunner Goslin as the regular supporting cast. Dave Kaler's scripts have a bizarre mixture of camp inventiveness and inexperience that rarely totally satisfy, but usually fascinate. Art was by the inimitable Steve Ditko, who also handled the superb Blue Beetle back-up strip in 83-86. Nightshade had her own strip drawn by Jim Aparo in 87-89.
SW

Captain Canuck

COMELY July 1975 to July 1976 (3); August 1979 to April 1981; 14 issues; 1 Summer Special 1980

Early issues were the solo work of Richard Comely and were rather painful to read. With the arrival of George Freeman on art, the title began to improve and from issue 5 have got progressively better, although the book does suffer from Canadian chauvinism. Back-up strips have always been interesting and make for good reading, especially 'Beyond,' in 9-12 and 14.
Key Issues: *10-12, Summer Special. DWC*

Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew

DC From March 1982; 8 issues +

The Zoo Crew is a funny animal JLA used by writer

Roy Thomas to lampoon comics and films. Sometimes it's successful, other times not, so try issue 3 for a representative issue. The feature debuted as a free preview in New Teen Titans 16.
FP

Captain Marvel

MF ENTERPRISES April 1966 to November 1966; 4 issues

Created by Carl Burgos (better known for coming up with the Human Torch), this Captain Marvel was a humanoid robot who could separate his body when he shouted 'Split', enabling various parts to fly off in all directions. The series was every bit as ludicrous as the premise.
FP

Captain Marvel

MARVEL May 1968 to December 1969 (19); June 1970 to August 1970 (21); September 1972 to May 1979; 62 issues; 1 GS December 1975

Captain Marvel's first two appearances were in Marvel Super-Heroes 12 and 13, but his own book quickly fell into a fairly standard, formularised rut. The first 19 issues should be avoided. The plots generally involved him being given orders by his Kree superiors to perform (often lethal) experiments on Earth people and him finding trite ways of disobeying them without arousing suspicion. After twice being cancelled, a shaky restart was swept aside by the great Thanos War series in 25-33, all plotted and drawn by Jim Starlin. This is a definite must and several odd issues of other titles also have interrelated stories (Iron Man 54, 55 and Marvel Feature (1) 12 etc.). Englehart then took over and 34-39 also have a good storyline in which the Watcher is tried by his own race for his interference in affairs on Earth in the past. The continued tale in 41-46 then clarifies some of the inconsistencies and co-incidences apparent in earlier issues. After the ensuing slump, the series picks up with Doug Moench's Titan plotline which concludes in Marvel Spotlight (2) 1 and 2. After three more features in that book and a few aimless performances elsewhere, the Kree captain's history concludes permanently in Marvel Graphic Novel 1—"The Death of Captain Marvel."
Key Issues: 25-35, 37-46, 58-62 APS

Captain Marvel Presents The Terrible 5

MF ENTERPRISES August 1966 (1); September 1967; 2 issues

The second issue was numbered 5 to continue the numbering from the regular series. This was just an extension of that series, containing stories that were, if anything, worse. The Terrible 5 in the title referred to the villains. Check panel 3 on page 1 of the second story in issue 5 for the most ludicrous dialogue ever to appear in comics.
FP

Captain Nice

GOLD KEY November 1967; 1 issue

This was a one-off comic based on a TV comedy series. The first and worst of 4 uncredited stories featured a villain named the Rooster who had a compulsion to crow about his crimes (literally) as the sun rose. He is captured at night in a deserted warehouse after Captain Nice had shined a spotlight in. The Rooster, believing that the sun has risen, crows and gives his position away. Pathetic stuff.
FP

Captain Savage

MARVEL January 1968 to March 1970; 19 issues

A very similar title to Sgt Fury, but it lacked the well-defined characters of the original. Gary Friedrich wrote and art was by Dick Ayers and John Severin and although they were competent, the book was never anything other than a pale imitation of the Howlers. Issues 2-4 featured the origin of Hydra and are a good attempt at continuity.
Key Issues: 2-4, 8, 9. DWC

Captain Storm

DC June 1964 to April 1967; 18 issues

This featured Capt Storm, a wooden-legged P.T. boat skipper (later of Losers fame) and his battles against the Japanese in the Pacific. Very average war stories.
HY

Captain Victory and The Galactic Raiders

PACIFIC From November 1981; 7 issues +

Great stuff by Jack Kirby which is superior to all his later work at Marvel. Whilst the subject of swashbuckling aliens on Earth may require more suspension of reality than is usual, it's done in the finest Kirby tradition and is enjoyable reading. The 3 back-up strips have been Ms Mystic by Neal Adams in 3, Steve Ditko's Missing Man in 6, and Kirby's own Goozlebobber in 4-6.
Key Issues: 1-7. DWC

The Cat

MARVEL November 1972 to June 1973; 4 issues

This title was spawned in a "Women's Lib" period in which many comics about female characters were written by women (this one by Linda Fite). It tells of a girl whose mental and physical abilities were increased to their highest potential. The Cat was not explicitly bad, but suffered from a scarcity of subplots, uninspiring villains and a lack of direction.
APS

Challengers of the Unknown

DC May 1958 to January 1971 (77); February 1973 to July 1973 (80); July 1977 to July 1978; 87 issues

The Challengers were 4 men who considered that they were living on borrowed time after having miraculously escaped death. They resolved to use this time to benefit mankind. Ace Morgan, Red Ryan, Prof Haley and Rocky Davis were created by Jack Kirby and were given their own mag after 4 appearances in Showcase. Most of their stories aren't that memorable, though Denny O'Neil wrote some nice stories in the late '60s. It was soon clear, however, that the comic, like the Challengers themselves, was living on borrowed time. The first revival was all reprint. When revived again in 1977, after a successful run in Super-Team Family, the series was written by Gerry Conway and drawn by Mike Nasser and Keith Giffen, who all did a fine job. The Swamp Thing guest starred in 82-87, as did Deadman in 84-87. The last revival deserved to have been continued and is worth getting.
Key Issues:** 81-87. **HY

Chamber of Chills

MARVEL November 1972 to November 1976; 25 issues

This title initially contained new material, most notably the first Marvel appearance of Brak the Barbarian in issue 2, but with the seventh issue, it became a horror reprint title.
FP

Chamber of Darkness

MARVEL October 1969 to December 1970; 8 issues; 1 Annual 1972

This book printed stories similar in style to old '50s stuff that Marvel always reprints, but produced by the then current Marvel staff. There was some very nice stuff here, including a strip called "Starr the Slayer" in 4 by Roy Thomas and Barry Smith that was really the first Conan tale. Issues 7 and 8 only contained only 1 new story and the book changed title to Monsters on the Prowl with issue 9.
Key Issues:** 1-6 **FP

Champions

MARVEL October 1975 to January 1978; 17 issues

This somewhat unlikely union of Hercules, Black Widow, Angel, Iceman and Ghost Rider was formed after all five of them had taken a hand in foiling one of Pluto's more obscure schemes when he attacked UCLA in order to capture Venus and Hercules. The major difference between the Champions and Marvel's other super-groups is that they were based on the West Coast (Los Angeles) and were formed, in theory, as "the super-team to help the average man." The first 6 issues by Isabella were somewhat insipid, nevertheless, the book had potential, as was proved by Bill Mantlo who effected a remarkable turnabout on taking up the scripting reins with issue 8. Byrne's arrival on pencils was also a distinct asset, but, unfortunately, the series was cancelled with 17. The dissolution of the Champions was tidied up in Peter Parker 17 and 18.
Key Issues:** 7-10, 12-15, 17. **APS

Champion Sports

DC November 1973 to March 1974; 3 issues

A short-lived (hardly surprising) title that featured ordinary sports stories by Joe Simon and Jerry Grandenetti.
HY

Charlton Bullseye

CHARLTON From June 1981; 9 issues +

All issues have been produced by amateurs, and most have been as entertaining as other current comics. No particular issue is brilliant, but the revivals of the Blue Beetle and the Question (in 1) and Captain Atom (in 7) are good, as is the Mauser strip in 6. The funny animal strips found in 2 and 6 are also different enough to merit a glance.
FP

Charlton Premiere

CHARLTON September 1967 to May 1968; 4 issues

A short-lived showcase title that featured some whimsical mini-masterpieces. Grass Green's Shape in issue 1 captured the spirit of Plastic Man, and that issue also starred Spookman, written and drawn by Pat Boyette. Archeologist Aaron Piper becomes the grisly time traveller with the aid of his moonstone anulet. Issue 2 featured the classic "Children of Doom" by Denny O'Neil and Pat Boyette. Set on Earth after a holocaust, what remains of humanity has been transformed into 3 kinds of mutants, teleporters, fireraisers and blind precognitives and the story concerns the attempts to stop an atomic bomb buried in the Earth's core from activating. Issue 3 stars Sinestro, Boy Fiend as he battles Peacemaker and Blue Beetle, Charlton's only teaming of their heroes during the '60s. Issue 4 is Steve Ditko's Unlikely Tales.
Key Issues:** 1, 2. **SWFP

Cheyenne Kid

CHARLTON (8) June 1957 to November 1973; 99 issues

The first 7 issues went under the title of Wild Frontier. This was a below average western comic notable only for the Wander back-up strip that ran in 66-87. It featured a galactic merchant from Sirius 5 stranded on Earth in the wild west. Written by Denny 'Sergius O'Shaughnessy' O'Neil and drawn by Jim Aparo, they both had their tongues firmly planted in their cheeks. The best western satire this side of Batlash.
SW

Claw

DC June 1975 to October 1976 (9); April 1976 to September 1978; 12 issues

A sword and sorcery series, this deserved more credit

than it got. The hero was Vulcan, a man with a hairy, webbed hand which he kept covered with a gauntlet—thus called "Claw." His hand also seemed to have a life of its own and there were interesting revelations about it later on. The whole series was written by David Michelinie, one of the better writers at DC at the time. Ernie Chan drew the first 7 issues and was replaced by Keith Giffen, who produced some lovely, if somewhat confusing, graphics. The title lived under the shadow of Conan, although it was never as boring. Claw's story was continued in *Warlord*.
HY

Combat Kelly

MARVEL June 1972 to October 1973; 9 issues

This was a war comic about a platoon of 12 ex-cons, one female, known as the Deadly Dozen. They were led by Combat Kelly. The books strictly followed the Marvel war comics formula until the last issue, when all the major characters were killed—probably Marvel's most realistic war comic.
FP

Conan

MARVEL From October 1970; 139 issues +; 7 Annuals 1973, 1976-1979, 1981, 1982; 5 GS September 1974-1975

Conan is a classic example of an original and inventive comic deteriorating into a trivial parody of former glories. Originally created by Robert E. Howard in a series of 1930s novels, Conan was a barbarian who wandered around ancient Earth, encountering a bewildering array of demons, monsters and magicians. He was the first character of his ilk to appear in the comics format and during the inital rush of enthusiasm, Roy Thomas produced some fine early tales and some good adaptations. His vision was ably interpreted by Barry Smith as artist. His Conan was not the muscle-bound clod that appears today, but was almost delicately (if such a word can be applied to Conan) portrayed. The first 15 issues and 19-24 were the undoubted artistic highspot of the series, the best story being "The Song of Red Sonja" in 24. John Buscema became artist with 25 and, apart from the occasional fill-in, has remained with the book ever since. His first issues were of a high standard, but his work since, while proficient, has been unspectacular and this seems to have coincided with Thomas temporarily losing interest in the title. Thomas' ambitious chronicalling of the three years Conan spent with the pirate queen, Belit, (58-100) was a spectacular failure. While maintaining the admirable concept of relating comic time to real time it was drawn out and anyone familiar with the original novels knew the outcome anyway. At best (rarely) it was readable. At worst (the multi-character crossover) it was laughably trite. The only really good issue in three years was a story that had originally appeared in Conan's infinitely superior black and white magazine and was reprinted in '78. With Thomas moving to DC Marc de Matteis and later Bruce Jones have inherited the scripting chores, a term that appears to be applicable here. They've brought a much needed fresh outlook without producing anything really spectacular. John Buscema remained as regular artist until just after Thomas left, and things have now improved artistically with Gil Kane as regular artist.
Key Issues: 24, 78. FP

Cougar

ATLAS April 1975 to July 1975; 2 issues

Average stuff about a stuntman who became involved with a vampire and a werewolf. The blurb for issue 3 promised "The most devastatingly different super-hero of all time," and for once it might have been, since the Cougar broke his spine in issue 2. Alas, it never appeared.
FP

Creatures on the Loose

MARVEL (10) March 1971 to September 1975; 37 issues

The numbering starts with issue 10 and continues from Tower of Shadows. Issue 10 features the first Kull strip. 11-15 feature weird/horror reprint stories and 16-33 all have 1 or 2 such stories as backups. Gullivar Jones and Thongor occupied issues 16-21 and 22-29 respectively. The former was an early version of John Carter concerning a man teleported to Mars to engage in heroic-fantasy-type battles and was fairly acceptable. Created by Lin Carter, Thongor was another barbarian a la Conan in all respects bar quality, which was abominable. Both storylines concluded when their features finished, which made a refreshing change.

Man-Wolf

30-37 In Spiderman 124, 125 J.J. Jameson's astronaut son, John, discovered a weird gem embodying the essence of an alien intelligence. When worn, the gem had the effect of turning him into a werewolf whilst on Earth and a stargod whilst on its home plane. The popularity of these 2 issues won Man-Wolf his own feature and although it initially appeared to be a flop the introduction of Kraft and Perez, taking over the storyline begun by Isabella in 32, transformed it into a dynamite little series. Despite being cancelled whilst in the most intriguing of situations the conclusion eventually saw light in Marvel Premiere 45 and 46.
Key Issues: 33-37. APS

The Creeper

DC June 1968 to April 1969; 6 issues

Newscaster Jack Ryder attended a costume party in a garish green wig and yellow body make-up. While there, he discovered an imprisoned professor who injected him with a serum that gave him additional strength and stamina and implanted a device that enabled him to transform himself instantly back to Jack Ryder. This was Steve Ditko's major contribution to the DC '60s renaissance. An appearance in Showcase proved popular enough to merit the Creeper his own title. The main body of this mag's all too brief run is linked together by a continuing plot thread, although Denny (Sergis O'Shaughnessy) O'Neil's clever co-plotting with Ditko makes each issue self-contained. The epic is marred by

Ditko leaving DC during the last issue, leaving them stuck for an appropriate artist to finish it off (Gil Kane got the job). Each issue is great, but check out 4 for an O'Neil/Ditko tour de force.
Key Issues: 1-4. SW

Crypt of Shadows

MARVEL January 1973 to November 1975; 21 issues

With a title like that, I'm sure it'll come as no great surprise to learn that this was another one of Marvel's '50s weird/horror reprint comics.
APS

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Dagar

GOLD KEY October 1972 to December 1976; 18 issues

Atrocious barbarian strip.
FP

Daredevil

MARVEL From April 1964; 187 issues +; 4 Annuals 1967, 1971, 1972, 1976; 1 GS 1975

This very erratic series has tended towards extremes; the good issues being very good and the bad ones appalling. In Stan Lee's first 40 odd issues, Daredevil followed all the traditional super-hero forumlae and the plots never evinced any excitement or suspense at all. It took Roy Thomas (finishing off a plot begun by Lee) to bring in some tension around issue 50. Conway's run (72-98) began horribly, but the introduction of the Black Widow breathed miraculous new life into the strip. The 2 characters formed a perfect contrast and Colan's art (he'd been pencilling since 20) hit a peak in this period. Gerber struggled to find his feet with the book and his issues are disappointing apart from the marvellous epic versus Mandrill and Nekra in 108-112. The Black Widow left in 124; the reasons why she had to go were excellently handled by Isabella in 120-123. Following what was arguably its only period of mediocrity, Jim Shooter and Roger McKenzie produced a brilliant run from 146, later assisted by Frank Miller on art. From 168, Miller assumed the scripting chores too and has done his utmost to maintain the quality. All 3 are to be commended for their portrayal of the characters, in particular the "nameless" hoods. Miller has shown how effective having one creator on story and art can be. He has also developed a remarkable talent for depicting the unbelievable and getting away with it.
Key Issues: *49-55, 58, 78-94, 108-112, 146-161, 163-186.*
APS

Dark Mansion of Forbidden Love

DC October 1971 to April 1972; 4 issues

This featured gothic romances done in the same style as the average DC mystery story, although issue 1 does have some spectacular Tony DeZuniga artwork in a book-length story. The title changed to Forbidden Tales of Dark Mansion with issue 5.
HY

Dazzler

MARVEL From March 1981; 20 issues +

The first issue of this title had 11 people listed in the credits, so you know it's got to be bad. It also had 11 guest stars, so Marvel also knew it was bad. Since then, some very silly things have occurred in this title, not the least of which was Odin holding a singing contest between the Dazzler and the Enchantress. It would appear that the Dazzler is intended to cultivate a female interest in comics, but I doubt that it's suceeding. To be bought at your own risk.
FP

DC Comics Presents

DC From August 1978; 50 issues + 1 Annual 1982

This is a Superman team-up title that has produced some nice stuff and a lot of rubbish. It got off to a good start, teaming Superman with Flash (1 & 2), Adam Strange (3) and the Metal Men (4) and all had the advantage of excellent Garcia-Lopez art. Many issues have featured JLA members and other co-stars have included the LSH (13), Superboy (14) and the Phantom Stranger (23) in a connected tale concerning Pete Ross and his son. Other stories that particularly stand out include a 3-part saga by Len Wein and Jim Starlin in 27-29, guest starring, respectively, Martian Manhunter, Supergirl and Spectre. Issue 26 not only contained a Marv Wolfman/Jim Starlin lead story with Green Lantern, but contained a free 16-page insert introducing the New Teen Titans. Roy Thomas brought back Hoppy the Marvel Bunny in issues 33-34 which guest starred the Marvel Family. Issue 36 ended the Starman series with Paul Levitz scripting and Starlin art. Starlin also drew 37, featuring Hawkgirl. Martin Pasko and Joe Staton offered a very unusual Superman/Plastic Man team-up in 39 and 41 contained a free 16-page insert featuring the 'new' Wonder Woman by Roy Thomas and Gene Colan. Since 25 there has been a semi-regular back-up series called "Whatever Happened to . . .?" dealing with the fates of long-forgotten heroes, the best being Star Hawkins (33), Rex the Wonder Dog

(35) and the Crimson Avenger in 38. The 1982 Annual featured the Supermen of Earths 1 and 2 fighting their evil counterpart on Earth 3, Ultra Man.
***Key Issues:** 1-4, 26-29, 33, 34, 36, 37, 39, 41. HY*

DC Special

DC December 1968 to December 1971 (15); Spring 1975 to September 1977; 29 issues

This was a giant-sized reprint title that eventually graduated to new material. Best of the reprints were the all-Infantino issue in issue 1; the super-heroine issue (3) containing a previously unpublished '40s Black Canary tale; the all-Kubert tales in 5 and the Jack Cole Plastic Man stories in 15. The best of the new tales were the last 3 issues, which contained Captain Comet and Tommy Tomorrow fighting dinosaurs (27); disaster stories starring Batman, Aquaman and LSH (28) and the previously untold origin of the Justice Society of America in 29, a must for all JSA fans.
***Key Issues:** 1, 3, 4, 15, 27-29. HY*

DC Superstar Holiday Special

DC April 1980; 1 issue (unnumbered)

As with the earlier 5 Star Super-hero Spectacular this was a one-shot dollar comic that contained 5 separate tales of DC strips, this time featuring Batman, Sgt Rock, the LSH, Jonah Hex and 3 mystery tales linked by a framing sequence. All the stories revolved arond the star over Bethlehem and although the mystery tales were the normal mundane fare, everything else was excellent. A comic worth getting and if you're still not convinced, Frank Miller drew the Batman tale.
***Key Issues:** April 1980 issue. FP*

DC Superstars

DC March 1976 to February 1978; 18 issues

This was originally a giant-sized reprint title, but it eventually switched to new material with issue 10. 11 was reprint but from 12 onwards contents were all new. Superboy in issue 12 is recommended as is the humourous work of Sergio Aragones (Mad and Plop artist) in 13. The Starhunters made an excellent debut in 16 and also very good was the first appearance and origin of the Huntress in 17, a comic which also contained the origin of Green Arrow and the first recorded case of the Legion of Super-Heroes.
***Key Issues:** 12, 13, 16, 17. HY*

Dead of Night

MARVEL December 1973 to August 1975; 11 issues

The first 10 issues contained the fairly predictable staple of '50s weird/horror reprints, but the last issue had a new full-length tale by Scott Edelman concerning the Scarecrow. He was the subject of a painting which was a dimensional gateway between Earth and another dimension rules by a demon and came to life to battle the demon's worshippers on earth. It was all pretty uninspired stuff, as were his subsequent appearances in Marvel Spotlight (1) 26 and Marvel Two-in-One 18. ***APS***

Defenders

MARVEL From August 1972; 112 issues +; 1 Annual 1976; 5 GS July 1974 to July 1975

Marvel's famous (notorious?) non-team first appeared in Marvel Feature (1) 1-3. Their members vary, the most permanent having been Dr. Strange, Hulk, Valkyrie and Nighthawk. The first 19 issues by Englehart and Wein are all above average, if nothing spectacular, with 8-11 chronicling half of the Avengers-Defenders war. The book's most consistently good period was Steve Gerber's reign in 20-29, 31-40. His continued story in the latter 10 involving the Headmen and the Celestial Man stands out as a milestone, and the best subplot detailed Valkyrie's quest to discover Barbara Norriss' past history. For a delightful 1-issue story see Giant-Size 4, also written by Gerber and sporting some good Don Heck art. Dave Kraft soon took over and produced the excellent Scorpio saga in 46-51. The character study of this morose, introspective villain makes these issues a must for anyone's collection. Kraft continued to produce something worth reading up to issue 61, including the intricate, if prolonged, Lunatik plot which was finally completed in 70-73. But after 61, the quality deteriorated as if in an ominous warning as to what was to come under Hannigan. Since 92, Marc DeMatteis' issues have had a frustrating aura about them, as interesting events have been encompassed in poorly written stories. His most recent issues (from 107) have shown more promise though, and are improving all the time.
***Key Issues:** 20-29, 31-40, 46-51, 111, 112, Annual 1, GS 3-5. APS*

Demon

DC September 1972 to January 1974; 16 issues

Etrigan the Demon is summoned by Merlin to battle Morgaine Le Fey. Etrigan takes human form and lives throughout history in a number of guises, the latest being Jason Blood, who is at first unaware that the Demon lives within him. Etrigan takes over the body whenever mystical danger threatens. Interesting villains include Morgaine Le Fey in 1, 2, and 16 and Witchboy (who has a very unusual cat) in 7, 14, and 15. The Demon was the creation of Jack Kirby, whose art and stories were still quite good at the time, although the stories were sometimes predictable and occasionally boring. Despite this the series was entertaining and a must for Kirby fans.
***Key Issues:** 1, 2, 7, 14-16. HY*

Demon Hunter

ATLAS September 1975; 1 issue

The premiere appearance of the Rich Buckler character dedicated to preventing the birth of a race of demons on earth. The character later re-surfaced at Marvel under the guise of Devil-Slayer and the plotline was concluded in Defenders 58-60. One of Atlas' worthier efforts.
***Key Issues:** 1. FP*

Destroyer Duck

ECLIPSE 1982; 1 issue

Written by Steve Gerber and drawn by Jack Kirby, Destroyer Duck is a vitriolic satire on the way Gerber feels that Marvel have handled his creation, Howard the Duck. The constant hammering home of Gerber's opinions soon grows tiresome, although Kirby's art is his best in a long time. The back-up strips, Groo the Wanderer by Sergio Aragones, Shary Flenniken's Ironthighs and 2 chapters of "Great Moments in Comic Book History," are all far worthier efforts than the title strip.
FP

Destructor

ATLAS February 1975 to September 1975; 4 issues

A series created by Archie Goodwin and Steve Ditko about a teenager who is injected with a wonder fluid and assumes a costumed identity to track down his father's killers. An obvious Spider-Man rip-off, the Destructor was nonetheless an enjoyable series.
Key Issues: 1-4. FP

Detective

DC From March 1937; 519 issues +

The original home of the Batman has been sadly mistreated by DC and it remains one of the most inconsistent comics ever produced, alternating between sheer drivel and sheer delight. The early '60s were a weak period until, in 1964, Batman's character was revitalized by Julie Schwartz and Carmine Infantino and for the next few years the book concentrated on good detective stories that were always entertaining. With the coming of the TV series the book went into a fast nose dive and the campy look was to remain the hallmark of the book until the late '60s. In 1968, Frank Robbins began writing stories and though the art remained poor, there was a general improvement leading to the excellent tales of the early 1970s. Though O'Neil, Adams and Giordano are the best known creative team on Detective during that time there were many other writers and artists who helped to move Batman closer to his original dark creature of the night image. In 1973 Archie Goodwin became editor of the book and produced many good stories and introduced many writers to the Batman. It was during this period that Goodwin wrote the Manhunter back-up series (437-443) with art by Walt Simonson which has become a must for any collection. Although the last few years have been a period of ups and downs, there has been 1 other flash of brilliance—this is, of course, the 6-issue run by Steve Englehart and Marshall Rogers. By returning the Batman to the style of the 1940s, they created what many people consider to be the definitive version of the darknight detective. Englehart left with 476 and Rogers followed 3 issues later. The comic became a dollar title with 481, and that issue and 482 are excellent comics, but after that quality slipped. The regular features, Batman, Robin and Batgirl all lacked pizazz and the best stories were the filler strips, Man-Bat, Demon and the Human Target. With 496 the comic switched back to regular size. The Batgirl strip remained as poor as ever, but Batman improved. 497 featured a very nice, affectionate Spirit parody by Gerry Conway and Don Newton, and the giant size 500 had the best Batman story of the '80s so far, "To Kill a Legend," written by Alan Brennert. Gerry Conway is now the regular writer of the Batman strip, and crosses over sub-plots and stories from the regular Batman comic, always giving a good read. Batgirl is as inane as ever and shows little sign of improving. Check out 517 for a really gross Batgirl story.
Key Issues: *327-343, 370-380, 395-410, 437-448, 468-479, 481, 482, 497, 500.* ***DWCFP***

Devil Dinosaur

MARVEL April 1978 to December 1978; 9 issues

The adventures of a pre-pubescent ape-boy and his big red dinosaur pal. This is the poorest of Jack Kirby's recent projects. His stories were trite and simplistic and anyone over the age of nine will get little satisfaction from this comic. If you insist on sampling Kirby's wares, number 3 is a good representative issue.
SW

Doc Savage

MARVEL October 1972 to January 1974; 8 issues; 1 GS 1975

Steve Englehart and Gardner Fox adapted stories of the man of bronze from the original novels by Kenneth Robeson. Doc Savage was rather similar to the Batman of the TV series, just happening to have a bulletproof glass shield in front of his door when the assassin comes to call, etc. However, if disbelief is suspended a tad more than usual, this becomes an enjoyable book.
FP

Doctor Solar

GOLD KEY October 1962 to April 1969; 27 issues

When scientist Doctor Solar is exposed to a normally lethal dose of atomic radiation his body is transformed into a walking reactor, giving him various powers. Eventually assuming the masked identity of the Man of the Atom in issue 5, Solar uses his miraculous abilities to counter the plotting of his arch enemy, Nuro. The first 4 issues feature Solar before he donned his costume and are drawn by Bob Fujitani. Most of the remaining issues are written by Paul Newman, with Frank Bolle drawing the bulk of the run. Al McWilliams produced some splendid art on 20-23's experiment with a continuing storyline. Probably the best individual tale is in 15 where the Man of the Atom has to relive his origin.
Key Issues: *1-5, 15, 20-23.* ***SW***

Doctor Strange

MARVEL From June 1974; 55 issues +; 1 Annual 1976; 1 GS 1975

Ever since 1973, the character of Dr Strange has been virtually unrecognisable from that of the man portrayed in the early '60s Strange Tales stories. Whereas he was

really nothing more than a super-hero functioning in magical dimensions then, he has graduated since to become the truly eldritch and universal occultist he is now. This has allowed for some monumental concepts and extremely abstract ideas to be embraced within the plots. Although it requires the reader to utilise much thought in order to fully grasp all therein, the series is by no means to everybody's liking; the writer has so few limitations on what he can do that the reader has little chance for speculating or feeling any tension as literally anything could happen in the next few pages or issues. I can virtually guarantee that, if you like this stuff, then you'll like at least 80% of the series and, if not, you'll dislike nearly all of it. With this in mind, the high spots have been chosen in comparison with the series overall and not relative to other comics in general.
Key Issues: *6-13, 15, 16, 49-53, 55.* ***APS***

Dr Strange

MARVEL (169) June 1968 to November 1969; 183 issues

This enigmatic little series owed more to its breath-taking Colan-Palmer artwork than to the scripting. Although the plots were better than those in the latter issues of Strange Tales (from which the series carries on directly), Roy Thomas did not seem to be able to come up with any original ideas behind them. 174-177 and 180-183 are the best (in both story and art) and the plotlines conclude in Sub-Mariner 22 and Hulk 126 wherein Dr Strange renounces his use of magic and abandons his role as a sorcerer.
APS

Doom Patrol

DC (86) March 1964 to October 1968 (121); February 1973 to July 1973; 124 issues

This is one of comicdom's most underrated super-groups. The Doom Patrol consisted of 4 members—Robot Man, Negative Man, Elasti-Girl and the Chief, a brilliant scientist who brought together the former 3, all of whom considered themselves freaks, due to their abnormal abilities. The group first appeared in My Greatest Adventure 80 and by 86 the book was retitled The Doom Patrol. What's surprising about this title is that it had excellent continuity and subplots, something editor Murray Boltinoff is hardly renowned for. The stories and characterisation by Arnold Drake were excellent and the art by Bruno Permiani, though never impressive, somehow suited the mood of the stories. Overall it was a perfect combination of talent. Due to falling sales it was decided to literally end the series with a big bang! The Doom Patrol were all killed when they sacrificed themselves rather than let a small village of 14 people be murdered. 122-124 were reprints and with the exception of Robot Man (who was revived for the new Doom Patrol in Showcase 94-96) the team has remained dead. This is a must for any serious comic collector. I can't praise it enough.
Key Issues: *87, 90, 91, 93, 96, 97, 99-113, 115-119, 121.*
HY

Doomsday + 1

CHARLTON July 1975 to May 1976; 12 issues

This title used the time honoured cliche of astronauts returning to a post nuclear devastated Earth and fighting various monsters, mutants and aliens. John Byrne did the art throughout and plotted later issues, taking over from Joe Gill, and the series as a whole was fair reading. Issue 6 was the last new issue and sporadic reprints have appeared since then. A new Doomsday + 1 appeared in Charlton Bullseye (The Fanzine) 4-5.
Key Issues: *4, 6.* ***DWC***

Doorway to Nightmare

DC February 1978 to October 1978; 5 issues

This was promoted as a class mystery book and excellent Mike Kaluta covers and the departure from DC's usual 3-stories per issue mystery format made it something different. Unfortunately, for all of DC's good intentions and art by Mayerik and Alcazar (1 & 2), the stories were just as average as the usual horror fare, the only discernable difference being their length. The book was cancelled in the 1978 DC implosion.
FP

Double Dare Adventures

HARVEY December 1966 to March 1967; 2 issues

B-Man, the Glowing Gladiator and Magic Master were the continuing heroes in this title, but more interesting by far were the short filler strips drawn by the likes of Crandall, Kirby and Williamson.
FP

Dracula

DELL December 1962 (1); November 1966 to March 1967 (4); July 1972 to July 1973, 7 issues

The first issue adapted the classic Dracula movie, and in issue 2 came. . .the super-hero Dracula. In 1966 Dracula was a scientist who wanted to redeem the somewhat tarnished name of his family, so he built up his body to Charles Atlas standard and invented a serum that enabled him to transform into a bat. With this truly formidable super power, he battled crime for 3 issues, all with atrocious art by Tony Tallarico. The scripter, quite understandably chose to remain anonymous. The classic issue is 4, in which Dracula gained a female partner and fought a man who stood on chairs with a sheet over his head and scared old women into giving him money. There was no issue 5, and 6-8 reprint 2-4, presumably with the intention of confusing buyers of the then newly introduced Tomb of Dracula.
FP

Dragonslayer

MARVEL October 1981 to November 1981; 2 issues

Art from Marie Severin and a script from Denny O'Neil produced a good adaptation that managed to avoid the plodding of the film. The comic is better than most adaptations and doesn't have the sanitised Sword and Sorcery look that abounds nowadays. ***DWC***

Dynamic Classics

DC October 1978; 1 issues

A 44-page reprint title that was killed by the DC implosion. It featured "Secret of the Waiting Graves" from Detective 395 and the first Manhunter story from Detective 437.
DWC

Dynamo

TOWER August 1966 to June 1967; 4 issues

A spinoff title from the Thunder Agents; it featured solo stories of the hero with the power belt and back-up stories of various Thunder Agents. Art was by such notables as Wally Wood, Reed Crandall and Steve Ditko and it's good reading throughout.
Key Issues: 1-4. DWC

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EC Classic Reprints

EAST COAST May 1973 to May 1976; 12 issues

The best comics produced during the 1950s were EC's 'new trend' series, and they're arguably the best comics line ever. EC comics covered a variety of genres, as the titles show: Weird Fantasy, Weird Science, Shock SuspenStories, Crime SuspenStories, Two-Fisted Tales, Crypt of Terror, Vault of Horror and Haunt of Fear, the last 3 being horror titles back in the days when horror comics lived up to their name. Each EC comic contained 4 superbly crafted stories, and this reprint series contains at least 1 representative issue from each title.
***Key Issues:** 1-12. FP*

E-Man

CHARLTON October 1973 to September 1975, 10 issues

Probably the best of Charlton's attempts at superheroes, E-Man was an intelligent, if naive, energy being who came to Earth and became a kind of cosmic Plastic Man. Nic Cuti's writing remained witty without cheapening the concept and Joe Staton's art was well suited to the character. The back-up strips were varied and entertaining reading, particularly Killjoy by Steve Ditko (2 & 4) and, of course, John Byrne's robotic hero Rog 2000 in 6, 7, 9 and 10. The run of E-Man is a delightful read and is highly recommended. E-Man also appeared in issue 4 of Charlton Bullseye (The Fanzine).
***Key Issues:** 1-10. DWC*

80-Page Giant

DC August 1964 to October 1965; 15 issues

As suggested by the title, this was a giant-size reprint comic. Most issues featured members of the Superman Family, Superman himself or Batman. The issues without these features are the most interesting. 4 and 9 have some classic silver-age Flash stories including Flash of Two Worlds in 9, and 7 has Sgt Rock stories by Joe Kubert. Issue 8 reprints the origins of Atom, Aquaman and the Justice League of America and was, coincidentally, the first comic I ever read.
FP

Emergency

CHARLTON June 1976 to December 1976; 4 issues

This series gave us new stories based on the medical rescue team featured in the TV series of the same name. The plots were very similar to typical TV plots, and I got the feeling that every third panel was cut. John Byrne drew the first issue.
FP

Eternals

MARVEL July 1976 to January 1978; 19 issues; 1 Annual 1977

The conceptually incredible mind of Jack Kirby created the Eternals, a race of beings who were more than man, yet less than gods and had dwelt undiscovered on Earth for centuries. With them came a mutant race known as the Deviants and the Celestials, who created all life on Earth and returned to judge whether it was worthy of continued existence. A scripter working from Kirby's plots could have saved the Eternals, but unfortunately they failed due to Kirby's abysmal sense of pacing. Good representative issues are the annual and 11, but stay well away from 13-16, which feature the cosmic powered Hulk. Loose plotlines were tied up in Thor 283-300.
FP

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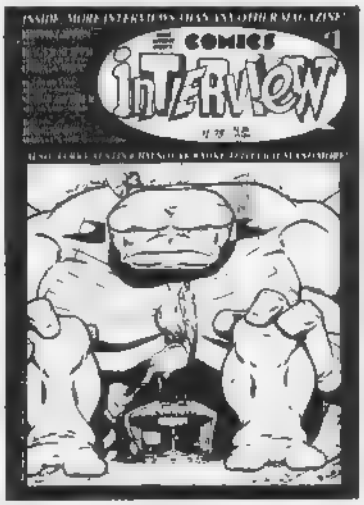

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Fantastic Four

MARVEL From November 1961; 247 issues ‡; 16 Annuals 1963 to 1971, 1973, 1976 to 1981; 6 GS May 1974 to October 1975

Unlike many of the other '60s titles, whose stories seem very crude now, the early FFs retain a certain innocent charm. 25, 26 (the best Hulk/Thing battle), 32 and Annual 2 (the origin of Dr Doom) are the foremost of these. With 36 a great deal more sophistication came into the plotting; 36-67 is arguably the most consistently good period of the title, introducing the Frightful Four, Inhumans, Galactus, Silver Surfer, the Kree and Him (Warlock). 39 and 40 narrate (in my opinion) their best story ever, with Daredevil leading a powerless FF back into the Baxter Building, which had been taken over by Dr Doom. The stories after 67 become distinctly mediocre and 94-104 are definitely to be avoided. With the departure of Stan Lee in 125, the book entered another strong period. 129-183 (by Roy Thomas and/or Gerry Conway), with only a few exceptions, are all above average; the really excellent issues are listed separately.

It should be noted that 177-179 and 181-183 form a continued story. The first two issues are excellent, but this quality is not maintained to the end. The next 48 issues are of very inferior standard, as no author was able to invent and capitalise upon any original plots or directions and all stories read like very poor imitations of what had gone before. The saviour came in the form of John Byrne. His reintroduction of many of the factors which made the book such a success in the early '60s and his will to experiment has resulted in a string of memorable issues, including the outstanding 20th anniversary issue (236).

Key Issues: *36-51, 57-67, 129-132, 140-153, 155-178, 233, 234, 236, 238, 239, 242-244, 247, Annual 2, 3* ***APS***

Fantastic Four Roast

MARVEL May 1982; 1 issue

Produced to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of Fantastic Four 1, this one-off issue constituted a series of non-stop one-line gags loosely held together under the pretext of a celebratory banquet. Featuring virtually every Marvel superhero, it's written and plotted by Fred Hembeck and Jim Shooter and is a great opportunity for those of you who like to play "identify the artist" to try your skills. (I got the cover!)
APS

Fantasy Masterpieces (1)

MARVEL February 1966 to October 1967; 11 issues

This reprint title featured mystery and science fiction strips. With 3 came Marvel's first Golden Age reprints; by the end of that run Captain America, Human Torch and Toro, the All Winners Squad, Sub-Mariner and the Black Knight (from the '50s) had been featured. No. 1 has a full-length phot of Stan Lee as its contents page. The title became Marvel Super-heroes with issue 12.
SW

Fantasy Masterpieces (2)

MARVEL December 1979 to January 1981; 14 issues

48 pages per issue, this reprinted Silver Surfer 1-14 and issues 8 onwards included back-up reprints of the Warlock-Magus epic from Strange Tales 178-181 and Warlock 9-11.
APS

Fatman, the Human Flying Saucer

LIGHTNING April 67 to September 1967; 3 issues

Otto Binder and C.C. Beck, the writer and artist responsible for most of Captain Marvel's original run, were once again teamed up on this strip. Fatman had the power to transform himself into a living flying saucer, but tended to be distracted during a battle by any kind of food. This was for kids only, as too much emphasis was placed on the ludicrous and the series lacked the Captain Marvel charm. It only goes to prove that lightning never strikes twice.
FF

F.B.I.

DELL June 1965; 1 issue

One of the many one-off titles that Dell produced in the '60s. It's a little dated, but has some nice art by Joe Sinnott, probably the last comic he pencilled before becoming the definitive inker on the Fantastic Four.
SW

Fear

MARVEL November 1970 to December 1975; 31 issues

Issues 1-9 reprint '50s weird/horror stories.

Man-Thing

10-19 Ted Sallis, a chemist trying to recreate the super-soldier serum used on Captain America, found himself surrounded by traitors and enemies and thus fled into the Florida swamp waters to escape. In desperation he injected himself with the serum, but, this area having great affinity for magic in the Marvel Universe, the swamp waters combined with the serum to transmogrify him into a foul 7' tall walking mass of rotting vegetation. With no mind to speak of, Man-Thing reacts involuntarily to the emotions of those around him; fear being the one which causes him the most distress. Steve Gerber caught the feel of the strip from the word go. Every issue is good, with 18 being a masterpiece; a lesson in how to summarize the nature of the human race in 19 pages of comic. 19 introduced Howard the Duck, but the actual story (concluded in Man-Thing (1) 1, apart from the characterisation of Howard, is not that outstanding.

Morbius, the Living Vampire

20-31 Michael Morbius, a Nobel prize winning biochemist inflicted with a fatal blood disease, injected himself with an enzyme distilled from the blood of a vampire bat, whereupon he was semi-cured but acquired an irresistible craving for human blood. The main drawback the series suffers from is in trying to do too many things at once and thus vacillating between the occult, science fiction, detective and fantasy genres. This is largely due to a total lack of writer/editor continuity. Overall, the series is mediocre despite several excellent plot twists.
***Key Issues:** 16-18. JFG*

Fighting American

HARVEY October 1966; 1 issue

This contained 3 reprinted strips and 3 strips produced during the 1950s by Simon and Kirby but never used. They all featured the outrageous patriotic Fighting American and his assistant, Speedboy. You can't fail to be entertained by this comic if you're familiar with any of the characters that this strip lampoons, many of whom (Captain America, Stuntman, Sandman) were Simon and Kirby's bread and butter during the 1940s.
***Key Issues:** 1. SW*

Fightin' 5

CHARLTON (28) July 1964 to January 1967 (41); October 1981 to October 1982; 48 issues

Hank Hennessy and his espionage task force do little to distinguish themselves in any of their lame adventures by Gill, Montes and Bache. Far more interesting are the first 2 Peacemaker strips by Pat Boyette in 40 and 41. The first 27 issues of this title were titled Space War, and issues 42-48 are reprints.
SW

Firestorm

DC March 1978 to November 1978; 5 issues

Gerry Conway's reworking of Nova/Captain Marvel was never given the time to see if it could have developed beyond its derivative origin. Although Conway's writing captured the feelings of youthful exuberance in the super-powered teenager well, Al Milgrom's art lacked its usual clarity and the title as a whole is just average super-hero fare.
DWC

First Issue Special

DC April 1975 to April 1976; 13 issues

In this tryout mag, DC revamped their Showcase format into a series of "first editions." There were 3 established characters in new strips – Metamorpho (3), Creeper (7) and a superb Dr Fate by Marty Pasko and Walt Simonson in 9. Of the new strips, 3 were by Jack Kirby. Atlas (1) and Manhunter (5) were forgettable, but the third was the much heralded Dingbats (6), the only kid strip attempted in the '70s. Apart from Mike Grell's Warlord (8) and the rather inferior Return of the New Gods (13) all the strips were failures.
***Key Issues:** 9. SW*

Five Star Super-hero Spectacular

DC 1977; 1 issue (unnumbered)

This was intended as a series of dollar comics but only the single issue appeared. It contained individual stories of the Flash, Batman, Green Lantern, Atom and Aquaman. The best tale of a nice bunch was the Batman story by Pasko and Nasser, which concluded plotlines from the Kobra book.
***Key Issues:** 1977 issue. FP*

Flash

DC January 1940 to February 1949 (104); From March 1959; 314 issues +; 1 Annual 1963; Spectacular 1978

The golden age Flash (now designated as resident on Earth 2) starred in the 1940s issues, with the familiar Flash taking over with the 1959 revival.

Caught in an accident that combined chemicals and a bolt of lightning, Barry Allen developed super speed and reflexes and became the Flash. After 4 tryouts in Showcase (4, 8, 13, 14) he moved into the comic vacated by his Earth 2 predecessor. Since then, with only 2 periods of realism (185-210 and 270-284), the strip has

remained basically the same: lots of clever super-speed tricks, costumed villains, and ingenious traps; in other words, fun. The earlier '60s issues were characterised by clever Fox and Broome scripts and lovely Infantino art. Since issue 210, the book has been scripted by Cary Bates who, for all his shortcomings in characterisation and continuity, consistently produces intriguing plots that keep everyone guessing. Carmine Infantino returned home with issue 296. Green Lantern was the back-up strip from 217-246 (excluding 222, 225 and 235 when he guest starred with Flash, and 236 and 244 when he didn't). Firestorm occupied the back-up slot in 289-299 and 301-304 and Dr Fate has been there since 305.
Key Issues: *160, 169, 178, 179, 187, 196, 205, 216, 219, 243, 244, 254-264, 296, 300, 308, 309.* ***FP***

Flash Gordon

WHITMAN September 1966 to December 1967 (11); February 1969 to January 1970 (18); November 1978 to March 1982; 37 issues

King Features handled the first 11 issues, with Charlton producing 12-18, before the rights fell to Gold Key/Whitman.

Created by the great Alex Raymond in the '30s, Flash's '60s chronicles were initiated by Archie Goodwin and Al Williamson and the few issues by this team are among the finest work produced in the '60s. After they left, Larry Ivie and Reed Crandall continued the series until King folded. The Charlton issues are pretty poor apart from 12 and 13, which sport art from Crandall and Jeff Jones respectively. Gold Key/Whitman's revival of the series featured solid scripting from John Warner and nice artwork from Carlos Garzon in earlier issues. 31-33 adapt the Dino deLaurentis film admirably (Bruce Jones script and Al Williamson art) and subsequent issues were drab by comparison. With Whitman suspending all their titles recently, Flash Gordon has returned once again to comics limbo.
Key Issues: *1, 4-6, 8, 11, 19, 31-33.* ***SW***

The Fly

ARCHIE August 1959 to October 1964; 30 issues

Teenager Thomas Troy was given a ring by a representative of a race of fly people from another dimension. This ring enabled him to become the Fly, a winged super-hero, once every 24 hours. The first 4 issues of this book were by Simon and Kirby and, as is usual with their pre-'70s work, they were good solid adventure stories that still make enjoyable reading. With their departure the title began a decline into lunatic plots, inane scripts and bland art. The whole series is best summed up as a non-Marvel version of Not Brand Echh. With issue 31, the title changed to Flyman.
DWC

Flyman

MIGHTY (31) May 1965 to September 1966; 39 issues

Noticing the success of the realistic super-heroes produced by Marvel, Archie revived and revamped a number of 1940s super-heroes and altered their existing super-hero line to fit the new "Mighty Comics" format. Thus, the Fly became Flyman and Jerry Siegel began producing even sillier plots than he had been turning out previously. It would be kind to label these issues pathetic. With issue 40 the title changed yet again to Mighty Comics Presents and it limped on for another 11 issues, starring various mighty heroes, before being cancelled.
FP

Forbidden Tales of Dark Mansion

DC (5) June 1972 to March 1974; 15 issues

After changing title from Dark Mansion of Forbidden Love, the content switched to straight mystery stories. Some nice art by Jack Kirby, Howie Chaykin and Gil Kane can be found here.
HY

Forbidden World

ACG August 1951 to November 1954 (34); August 1955 to August 1967; 145 issues

The success of the horror anthology format introduced in Adventures Into the Unknown prompted ACG to produce a second title in the same vein. As with Adventures Into the Unknown, the stories are superior to those put out by other companies and it's worth sampling at least 1 issue. Herbie starred here prior to his own series in all the recommended issues, but the only conventional super-hero to appear here was Magicman in 125-141. He was a lacklustre character who really displayed the plot deficiencies often incurred when using a near omnipotent super-hero. It could often be asked why Magicman hadn't ended the story in 3 pages instead of 15. The feature was written by Richard Hughes, using the alias of Zev Zimmer this time, and drawn by Pete Costanza.
Key Issues: *73, 94, 110, 114, 116.* ***FP***

Forever People

DC March 1971 to November 1972; 11 issues

This great comic was involved in Jack Kirby's New Genesis/Apokalips war. It featured young gods from New Genesis, Mark Moonrider, Beautiful Dreamer, Vyking the Black, Big Bear and Serifan, plus the mysterious Infinity Man combating Darkseid and his minions in Earth-based adventures. Issue 1 offered a great character analysis of Superman. Issues 4-9 also reprinted golden age Sandman stories by Simon and Kirby. A comic not to be missed.
Key Issues: *1-11.* ***HY***

For Your Eyes Only

MARVEL October 1981 to November 1981; 2 issues

A surprisingly bad adaptation from the one company that should have been able to do a good job. Howie Chaykin's art is stiff and the script by Larry Hama suffers from being based on the worst James Bond film to date. Strictly for 007 fanatics. ***DWC***

Four Star Spectacular

DC April 1976 to February 1977; 6 issues

This giant-sized reprint title featured nice super-hero oldies, if nothing fantastic, though 1 had a re-drawn golden age Flash story.
HY

The Fox and the Crow

DC January 1952 to March 1968; 108 issues

Using characters from the Columbia cartoon films, this series changed the concept of the wily fox: The fox here was constantly outwitted by the wily crow. As funny animal comics go, this is great if one only reads a few issues, but it becomes samey after a while. Well worth sampling though. The title changed to Stanley and His Monster with 109 and it lasted a further 7 issues.
FP

Frankenstein

DELL October 1964 (1); September 1966 to March 1967, 4 issues

Issue 1 was a reasonable adaptation of the 1931 film, but the other issues were atrocious. Written by someone who chose to remain anonymous, and drawn by Tony Tallarico, they featured the monster as a super-hero who sported a white crew-cut and a red costume. For lovers of esoterica only.
FP

The Frankenstein Monster

MARVEL January 1973 to September 1975; 18 issues

This series started very well, with an excellent adaptation of Mary Shelley's novel by Gary Friedrich and Mike Ploog, in 1 and 2. Successive issues didn't live up to the initial promise and the departure of Ploog with issue 6 really saw the book die. Doug Moench revived the monster in the present in issue 12, but he seemed to put little thought into his writing and the eventual cancellation was a blessing. The quality of the book is mirrored by the title of the letters page: "Let's be Frank."
Key Issues: 1, 2. FP

Freedom Fighters

DC April 1976 to August 1978; 15 issues

The Freedom Fighters were a group of characters that DC had acquired from the defunct Quality group. They were first banded together in JLA 107, where it was revealed that their homeworld had been overrun by Nazis. Due to the profusion of alternate Earths at DC they were moved to Earth 1 for their own series, where they soon became hunted by the law. The scripting fell to Bob Rozakis, who (intentionally?) seemed to aim it at the younger audience, using ludicrous villains and tired plots. Apart from the superb issue 12 the promise of some great characters was never realised here.
Key Issues: 1-3, 12. FP

Fright

ATLAS June 1975; 1 issue

The only issue of this title featured the wonderfully original "Son of Dracula," whose secret identity was Mr A Lucard (read it backwards). Frank Thorne art couldn't save a trashy script. Avoid it.
FP

The Frogmen

DELL April 1962 to March 1965; 12 issues

One of a small group of '60s sub-aqua comics. Compared with Dell's usual offerings of the period, this title occasionally sports some surprisingly good artwork, including Toth in issue 5.
SW

From Beyond the Unknown

DC November 1969 to December 1973; 25 issues

With the exception of a new story in 7 & 8, this title reprinted some of the classic short science fiction stories from the 1950s issues of Strange Adventures and Mystery in Space. Every issue contains some gems.
FP

The Fury of Firestorm

DC From June 1982; 5 issues +

The second series starring the nuclear man has so far been enjoyable. Gerry Conway is writing some good stories (Firestorm is his creation after all) and Pat Broderick's none-too-serious style of art suits the mood of the series perfectly.
HY

The Geek

DC October 1968 to December 1968, 2 issues

This comic is regarded as a joke, even by the DC staff. Created, written and drawn by Joe Simon (the man who gave you Captain America) the Geek was a tailor's dummy brought to life and given super strength by a bolt of lightning. He befriended a group of hippies and helped them further the cause of "peace, love and flower power" through a number of misadventures.
Key Issues: *1,2.* ***HY***

Ghost Rider (1)

MARVEL February 1967 to November 1967; 7 issues

The original Ghost Rider was a western hero who dressed in white and coated his clothes and horse with "a phosphorescent substance" to give the appearance of a ghost. Some nifty Dick Ayers art but, apart from his gimmicky appearance the Ghost Rider was as ordinary as most Marvel western heroes. His adventures were later picked up in Western Gunfighters.
FP

Ghost Rider (2)

MARVEL From September 1973; 73 issues +

Johnny Blaze made a pact with Satan and gained his hellfire powers. A tremendously visual character with his flaming cycle and blazing skull, the Ghost Rider's stories have always been less than impressive. As a whole the series has been totally directionless since the first few issues and has dumbfounded everyone by not only remaining on sale, but also going monthly. Things have improved recently, though, with Roger Stern scripting the title. 'Freaks' in issue 70, although liberally adapting some ideas from Swamp Thing 2 is worth a look, but the only other issue that really rises above the usual twaddle is 35, which features a cross-country motor cycle race against Death, written and laid out by Jim Starlin.
FP

Ghosts

DC October 1971 to May 1982; 112 issues; 1 special 1977

For a long time this comic actually adapted true "Tales of the Weird and Supernatural" but they were no better than the average horror story. There have been some nice tales and good art, but you'll have to look around. The later issues of this title were interesting, though, with DC's resident ghost breaker, Dr 13, having his own series between 95 and 102. The Spectre guest-starred in 97-99.
HY

Giant-Size Chillers (2)

MARVEL February 1975 to August 1975; 3 issues

The first series was titled Giant-Size Dracula from 2 on; this second series was one of only two Giant-Size titles not to have a parent book. It mainly featured '50s weird/horror reprints, except for 3 which had some more recent reprints with art by Smith and Wrightson.
APS

Giant-Size Super-Heroes

MARVEL June 1974; 1 issue

This was the second of Marvel's Giant-Size line and was slightly shorter than later books, which sold for 15¢ more. It contained a Conway/Kane tale in which Spider-Man fights Morbius and Man-Wolf. Also included are "The Gallery of Spider-Man's Famous Foes" from early annuals.
FP

GI Combat

DC (44) From January 1957; 24 issues +

This title was another inherited from Quality. Since 87 the main series has been The Haunted Tank. The tank is haunted by a civil war general who is the ancestor of one of the crew. Despite this occult suggesting, it has always been a realistically written series by top war writer Robert Kanigher complemented by good art from Sam Glazman. Kanighan always manages to make the stories interesting and adds a touch of realism by showing the misery of war. Since 201 this has been a Dollar Comic.
HY

G.I. Joe

MARVEL From June 1982; 5 issues +

Not, as you might believe, a comic concerning the exploits of one soldier (despite being subtitled 'A Real American Hero'), but rather an updated version of SHIELD, featuring a counter-terrorism group. It's all pretty much a waste of paper with trite plots complemented by sloppy art.
FP

Godzilla

MARVEL August 1977 to July 1979; 24 issues

Doug Moench handled this attempt at the famed "king of monsters" with his usual competence, but the title never developed beyond its "see who Godzilla's gonna' stomp this issue" idea. Characterisation was supplied by a large supporting cast, including most of SHIELD, but the book was rather aimless and is very juvenile reading, although I suppose that was what was intended
DWC

Gold Key Spotlight

GOLD KEY May 1976 to February 1978; 11 issues

Mostly featuring funny animal and comedy strips from the regular Gold Key line, issue 6 contains a new Dagar story, 8 is more from the occult files of Dr Spector and 9 features Tragg and the Sky Gods
SW

Gorgo

CHARLTON May 1961 to September 1965; 23 issues

This continues the adventures of the amphibious baby dinosaur from his movie debut. Issue 1 adapts the movie, in which Gorgo and his mum wreck London. the following issues chronicle a series of unlikely liaisons with humans, and Gorgo, for the most part, is a guest star in his own title, popping up for the inevitable battle of the monsters scene at the end. Joe Gill's scripts are occasionally brilliant and often funny, but always inconsistent. The only issues worth looking at are those drawn by Steve Ditko (1-3, 13-16). The less said about Bill Montes, Vince Colletta and Ernie Bache the better.
SW

Green Lantern

DC August 1960 to May 1972 (89); From September 1976; 157 issues +

After a successful series in Showcase, DC's most cosmic super-hero was given his own comic. Although most of the earlier stories were never really powerful or exciting, they were well handled by Gardner Fox and John Broome with artist Gil Kane. They never fell short of ideas or super-villains and GL was always entering different worlds, times and dimensions. Towards the mid-'60s, the stories improved, reflecting more super-heroics, especially when the Earth 2 Green Lantern was on hand. Issues 76-87 and 89 featured the much acclaimed Green Lantern/Green Arrow series by Denny O'Neil and Neal Adams. This was an absolutely superb series which brought relevance to comics and dealt directly or indirectly with such social problems as racism, corruption, pollution and over population. The 2-part drug saga in 85-86, wherein Green Arrow's ward, Speedy, became a drug addict, must be singled out as a comic book milestone. Unfortunately, GL's ring was unable to stave off cancellation with 89, but the series continued as a back-up feature in the Flash comic. When the comic was revived in 1976, the stories were pure super-hero adventures, still starring Green Arrow and sometimes Black Canary. They ranged from very good to mundane stuff from O'Neil and artists Mike Grell and Alex Saviuk. Green Arrow was phased out with 122. The comic took a turn for the better when Marv Wolfman took over the writing, only to be let down by Joe Staton's uninspired art. The Omega Men premiered in 141, and 150 was a giant issue featuring many Green Lanterns from other space sectors. In order to give the comic more of a space adventure feel, Green Lantern has now been ordered off Earth for a year by his masters, the Guardians of the Universe. Back-ups have been the Earth 2 Green Lantern in 108-110, Adam Strange in 132-147 and Tales of the Green Lantern Corps from 148.
Key Issues: *45, 52, 63, 76-87, 89, 91-93.* ***HY***

Grim Ghost

ATLAS January 1975 to July 1975; 3 issues

The Grim Ghost was a 17th century highwayman who went to hell after being hung. Satan offered him the opportunity to return to earth, provided that he kept up a supply of evil souls flowing to hell. He was then given a flying horse and sundry abilities and dispatched to 20th century Earth. If one doesn't question Satan's logic too much Fleisher and Colon produced a nice series here.
Key Issues: *1-3.* ***FP***

Gunhawks

MARVEL October 1972 to October 1973; 7 issues

This book starred Reno Jones and Kid Cassidy and is obviously not one of Marvel's subtler plagiarisms. It's a western book that is only of interest for being the second book to use a black protagonist.
FP

Hands of the Dragon

ATLAS June 1975; 1 issue

Every comic company attempted to cash in on a contemporary fad with a kung-fu comic and Atlas were only different in that their effort was far worse than anybody else's. Like all good kung-fu heroes, the Dragon learned his skill in a remote Tibetan monestary and, aided by a mystic medallion, he searched for his evil twin in the USA.
FP

The Hawk and the Dove

DC September 1968 to July 1969; 6 issues

A mysterious voice gave Hank and Don Hall heightened physical prowess and costumes that magically appeared whenever their owners were in danger. Their opposing views on violence determined the super-heroes they became—the angry Hawk and the pacifist Dove. Bearing the distinctive stamp of Steve Ditko, the strip is enhanced by the scripting of Steve Skeates. Only the first two issues and the strip's debut in Showcase 75 are drawn by Ditko. Gil Kane worked on later issues, but failed to match Ditko's intensity.
Key Issues: 1, 2. SW

Hawkman

DC May 1964 to September 1968; 27 issues

Katar and Shayera Hol, winged police officers from the planet Thanagar, continued their battle with injustice here on Earth. Gardner Fox and Murphy Anderson's slick and consistent stories make any of the first 21 issues of the title a treat to read. Sadly, the last 6 issues before Hawkman's forced merger with the Atom's comic have nothing to recommend them except 27's lovely Kubert cover, and 25's golden age Hawkman reprint.
Key Issues: 1-21. SW

The Heap

SKYWALD September 1971; 1 issue

This one shot publication starred a test pilot who was turned into a "manthing" after falling into the usual chemical vat. Tom Sutton turned out an excellent story which compares very favourably with the similar Marvel and DC concepts and captures well the man as monster notion which abounded in the early '70s.
Key Issues: 1. DWC

Herbie

ACG May 1964 to February 1967; 23 issues

Herbie Popnecker was an ugly little fat child with inch thick glasses and a predilection for lollipops who occasionally became a super-hero called the Fat Fury. He lived in a surreal world where he was known and respected by everyone and thing apart from his father, who referred to him as "a fat little nothing." He was able to do almost anything with the aid of some special lollipops. Shane O'Shea's stories were hilarious and Ogden Whitney's whimsical art matched them perfectly. Herbie first appeared in Forbidden Worlds 73, 94, 110, 114 and 116.
Key Issues: 1-23. FP

Hercules

MARVEL September 1982 to December 1982; 4 issues

This 4-issue mini-series is a noble effort from writer/artist Bob Layton to impart some original treatment to a character who has been in a state of total stagnation ever since he first appeared. Cast out into space by Zeus in order to learn humility, Hercules lands himself in a succession of ridiculous situations, and always ends up with egg on his face. Sadly, despite Layton's laudable intentions, some of the individual details and specifics don't quite manage to live up to the overall concept.
APS

Hercules

CHARLTON October 1967 to September 1970; 13 issues

A late addition to the Charlton line of 'Action Heroes', Hercules was the only title to survive the Charlton Implosion of 1968. Written by Joe Gill and drawn by

initially before lapsing into paltriness. Indeed, I find it sad to say that the feature of his run to date that I enjoyed most was the letter in 269 explaining why the Hulk always wears purple pants.
Key Issues: *163-170, 176-178, 182, Annual 7.* ***APS***

Human Fly

MARVEL September 1977 to March 1979; 19 issues

Bill Mantlo wrote this series about a stuntman who actually exists. Despite this solid basis for a series, it failed due to the fact that readers used to seeing super-heroes doing anything didn't want to read about a guy who walked tightropes and rescued children every month. Poor art by Frank Robbins and Lee Elias didn't help either. Avoid.
FP

Human Torch

MARVEL September 1974 to November 1975; 8 issues

This series reprinted the first 8 Torch stories from Strange Tales backed up by 5-8-page reprints of golden age Human Torch stories.
APS

comics evergreen Sam Glanzman, the young demi-god's earthly adventures got more and more psychedelic before cancellation in 1970. The Thane of Bagarth back-up strip by Steve Skeates is drawn by Jim Aparo in early issues.
SW

Hercules Unbound

DC November 1975 to September 1977; 12 issues

Breaking free of the chains that had bound him for 1000 years, Hercules stepped into 1986 and a world that had been devastated by a nuclear war, fanned by Ares. The first 6 issues, written by Gerry Conway and drawn by Jose Luis Garcia Lopez (although Wally Wood is inking, and it all looks like Wood art) concern Hercules' search for Ares. Once Ares is defeated, Hercules and his companions wandered around the ruined planet encountering unusual people, including the Atomic Knights in 10 and 11. Later issues were by David Michelinie, Cary Bates and Walt Simonson, and they tied up a lot of loose ends in DC continuity while continuing to produce good stories. The series was also properly ended prior to cancellation.
***Key Issues:** 1-12. FP*

Hot Wheels

DC April 1970 to February 1971; 6 issues

There were quite a few "Hot car" type mags around in the mid-'60s (you can almost see the Beach Boys reading them in their little deuce coupes) and although this was a little later, it was undoubtedly the best. Scripts were by Joe Gill and a fledgling Len Wein among others, and artists included Alex Toth and Neal Adams.
SW

House of Mystery

DC From January 1952; 309 issues +

This started off as a mystery comic and it changed format in the mid-'60s to feature the Martian Manhunter (143-173) and Dial H for Hero (156-173). To my mind, the better was Dial H for Hero; you got well plotted, fun stories, three new (albeit sometimes ridiculous) heroes per issue and some nice Jim Mooney art. With 174 the mystery format was readopted and, although some notable artists have appeared here, the stories are repetative and boring. I, Vampire has been the cover feature since 294.
FP

House of Secrets

DC December 1956 to October 1966 (80); September 1969 to March 1976 (140); September 1976 to November 1978; 154 issues

Standard horror fare from DC which has had the occasional artistic highspots, eg 87, 92 (the 1st Swamp Thing tale), and 94 by Wrightson, 82 and 90 by Adams and 98 by Kaluta. In the main though, apart from tales of Mark Merlin, Prince Ra-Man and Eclipso in the mid-'60s, the book has run the usual O. Henry tales with a great reliance on Spanish artists. 140 starred the Patchwork Man.
DWC

House of Yang

CHARLTON July 1975 to June 1975; 6 issues

Joe Gill scripted Charlton's only spin off title (from Yang), which featured the adventures of a Chinese kung-fu character. The idea was more interesting than the result, but it is a good example of Charlton's willingness to experiment. Neither the stories nor the art, by Sanho Kim, were up to much and the title is very lacklustre.
DWC

Howard the Duck

MARVEL January 1976 to May 1979; 31 issues; 1 Annual 1977

Steve Gerber's most controversial creation was one of these characters who was intended to push the medium forward, like Swamp Thing or Warlock, or to drown comics in an intellectual bog, like Killraven, and therein lies the controversy. Early issues managed a nice mixture of parody and social comment, but as the book progressed it began to suffer from Gerber's outraged intellectual morals, as seen in the Soofi anti-homosexual stories (20,21) and extended aimless plotting, such as the Dr Bong storyline. Gene Colan was the longest serving artist and did a good job, as did Val Mayerik on issues 22 and 23, a great satire on Star Wars. Bill Mantlo took over the book with 30 but didn't have much time to show how badly suited he was to the character before the book was cancelled.
***Key Issues:** 1-7, 22-24, Annual 1. DWC*

Hulk

MARVEL May 1962 to March 1963 (6); (102) From April 1968; 276 issues +; 11 Annuals 1968, 1969, 1971, 1972, 1976-1982; 1 GS 1975

The first 6 issues are very superficial; they are interesting only for the Hulk's relationship with Rick Jones and because of the ever-changing conditions which caused Bruce Banner to change to the Hulk and back. The numbering of the second run continues from Tales to Astonish (1). The problem with writing the Hulk is the lack of opportunity for characterisation. It has proved to be very difficult to develop character in a creature with the intellect of half a moron. Every writer has come up with a few reasonable issues initially and then petered out of good ideas. Thus, 103-108 (Gary Friedrich) and 122-132 (Roy Thomas) are passable and 140 and Avengers 88 (Harlan Ellison and the introduction of Jarella) are worth reading, as is the following Jarella story in 148. The book's best period was 163-182 by Steve Englehart and then Thomas or Gerry Conway, which are all at least average. A long stretch of mediocrity (or worse) followed, except for one brief flash of inspiration by Roger Stern in 222-229. Bill Mantlo commenced scripting with 245 and, in keeping with tradition, produced 4 reasonable issues

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Inferior 5

DC April 1967 to October 1968 (10); September 1972 to November 1972; 12 issues

After 3 issues in Showcase (62, 63, 65), DC's super-hero parody group gained their own comic. E. Nelson Bridwell wrote amusing stories starring the team—Merryman, Dumb Bunny, White Feather, The Blimp and Awkwardman—and introduced character parodies of the Justice League (renamed the Freedom Brigade), Tarzan (Darwin of the Apes), the DC staff, Man from U.N.C.L.E. (C.O.U.S.I.N. F.R.E.D.) and, naturally various Marvel super-heroes. Do the Cobweb Kid, Sub-Moron, the Kookie Quartet or Thor of Vailhallaballoo remind you of anybody? Issues 11 and 12 reprinted 2 Showcase stories featuring the Inferior 5.
***Key Issues:** 1-12. HY*

Inhumans

MARVEL October 1975 to August 1977; 12 issues

This was Marvel's second attempt at giving the Fantastic Four's guest stars their own book and it was started in a very strong fashion with Doug Moench writing and George Perez on art. Moench used the cast of characters well and introduced good subplots, which gave the book an interesting depth. Gil Kane did the art in 5-7 with Perez back for 8 but after that the series became stale and was soon cancelled; the plotlines were tied up in Captain Marvel 53 and FF Annual 12.
***Key Issues:** 1-8. DWC*

Invaders

MARVEL August 1975 to September 1979; 41 issues, 1 Annual 1977; 1 GS June 1975

This was Roy Thomas' labour of love, in which he recreated the golden age All Winners Squad in all but name. The series began with a giant-sized origin, but converted to a standard size comic with its second issue (which was also numbered as 1). The first issues were a delight, as Thomas weaved plots around the Invaders and other golden age characters, culminating in the Battle for Berlin (16-21). Frank Robbins was artist until 29 and he was well suited to create the right look for the era in which the stories were set, but his departure saw the book go into a period of decline. From issue 30, there was an apparent loss of interest by Thomas and the last dozen issues were marred by a glut of reprints and fill-ins and the attendant loss of continuity. A special mention should be made of the 1977 Invaders annual, which tied up the inconsistencies in the Avengers World War II battle with the then unamed Invaders (Avengers 71) and is one of Thomas' best tales.
***Key Issues:** 12, 13, GS 1, Annual 1. DWC*

Iron Fist

MARVEL November 1975 to September 1977; 15 issues

On being transferred to his own book, Iron Fist underwent a remarkable change in production. Although it took 5 writers and 6 artists to produce his 11 issues in Marvel Premiere, it needed but one of each—Chris Claremont and John Byrne—to create the 15 issues here. Claremont wrote the last 2 Premiere issues and these, together with Iron Fist 1-7 form a continuing storyline. 5-7 are extremely good, but a lot of unnecessary sidetracking occurs in 2-4, which detracts from the story. Thereafter, the book moves from strength to strength and the plotlines left hanging in 15 are resolved in Marvel Team-Up 63 and 64. Readers are warned that this is a typical Claremont book; there are so many subplots that the whole series reads like a continued story and you really need every issue (including the 11 Premiere and 2 Team-Up ones) to be able to appreciate everything. With the title's cancellation Iron Fist became permanent co-star in Power Man's comic.
***Key Issues:** 8-15. APS*

Iron Jaw

ATLAS January 1975 to July 1975; 4 issues

Formerly a minstrel, Iron Jaw's original jaw was removed by a jealous admirer of his talents and it was replaced with the iron jaw by a witch. The jaw distinguished him from other barbarians and produced a

nice series by Mike Fleisher and Pablo Marcos, although Gary Friedrich wrote the origin tale and Mike Sekowsky illustrated the first issue.
***Key Issues:** 1-4. FP*

Iron Man

MARVEL From May 1968; 163 issues +; 4 Annuals 1970, 1971, 1976, 1977; 1 GS 1975

The first 42 issues of this title carried on in much the same way as the series in Tales of Suspense, with mundane scripts from Goodwin, Brodsky and Conway. It was Gary Friedrich who put some life back into the strip in 45, 46, work initially continued by Mike Friedrich, who set the scene for the Thanos series in Captain Marvel with the first appearances of Moondragon and the Destoryer in 54 and 55. Neither was particularly well done though. Steve Gerber produced a fine 2-parter in 57 and 58 (his only Iron Man story apart from the excellent Annual 3) before Mike Friedrich took over again, and began the war of super-villains multi-part epic. Despite being interrupted by fill-ins and reprints and let down by a badly plotted conclusion, this was, until recently, the best continued tale in Iron Man. After that the book fell back into the same old rut and apart from a 2-part story by Herb Trimpe (93-94) and a Bill Mantlo tale in 103-108, nothing very good appeared. With the arrival of John Romita Jr on the art in 115 and David Michelinie and Bob Layton as plotters in 116, the potential of Iron Man and his alter ego Tony Stark was finally realised and utilised. 41 months of excellent stories followed, including an Eagle Award winner for best single issue (128) and, to my mind, the best ever Hulk story in 131-132. Unfortunately though, both Michelinie and Layton had left by 157, leaving Denny O'Neil as the latest scripter. While not bad, his stories haven't come anywhere near to matching those that preceeded his arrival on the comic.
***Key Issues:** 57, 58, 68-71, 74, 75, 77, 93, 94, 115-121, 123-128, 130-153, 156, Annual 3. FP*

Iron Man and Sub-Mariner

MARVEL April1968; 1 issue

This comic bridged the gap between Tales to Astonish 101 and Sub-Mariner 1 and did the same for Tales of Suspense 99 and Iron Man 1.
DWC

Isis

DC November 1976 to January 1978; 8 issues

Professor Andrea Thomas, with the aid of a magic parchment, transformed herself into the Egyptian goddess Isis—nemesis of evil. An entirely forgettable comic based on a TV series with cardboard scripts by Jack Harris.
SW

The Jaguar

ARCHIE September 1961 to November 1963; 15 issues

When zoologist Ralph Hardy touched his magic belt and said the word 'Jaguar' his moustache disappeared and a costume appeared as he became the Jaguar, master of the animal kingdom. He could fly, control all animals and was super strong and invulnerable. For all that he was also dead boring, and the static art of John Rosenberger made things worse.
FP

Jigsaw

HARVEY September 1966 to December 1966; 2 issues

Astronaut Gary Jason's body is reassembled by aliens after they have unwittingly injured him. He finds that his limbs now stretch just like Mr Fantastic's and Plastic Man's. A very silly comic.
SW

Jimmy Olsen

DC October 1954 to March 1974; 163 issues

During the 1960s most issues of this comic offered 2 or 3 light-hearted, but extremely entertaining stories starring Superman's best pal. Most of them involved Jimmy disguising himself in various roles to obtain scoops for the Daily Planet, his on-off romance with Lucy Lane, turning into weird creatures, gaining super powers etc. A few stories in the early 1970s had a more serious tone to them, eg 127, which dealt with slums. It also received the largest amount of letters ever for a comic at the time. A drastic change came to the comic when Jack Kirby took over with 133. Kirby placed the book within his amazing New Genesis/Apokalips war, revived the Golden Guardian and the Newsboy Legion from the '40s, and introduced other amazing concepts. Even though Olsen himself took a back seat in these stories, they still stand out. After Kirby left the series started to decline slowly. There was an attempt to get the flavour of the 1960s stories, but it failed. The comic eventually became Superman Family. Issues 141-148 featured golden age Simon and Kirby Newsboy Legion reprints, and 150-151 had Jack Cole Plastic Man reprints.
Key Issues: *127, 133-139, 141-148* ***HY***

John Carter

MARVEL June 1977 to October 1979; 28 issues, 3 Annuals 1977, 1978, 1979

Of Marvel's two books using the creations of Edgar Rice-Burroughs this was by far the better. Marv Wolfman and Chris Claremont set their tales in a 12-year gap in the chronology of the original books and all are good, with Claremont's 12-part "Master Assassin of Mars" tale (16-27) standing out in particular. Issue 18 was drawn by Frank Miller.
FP

Johnny Thunder

DC March 1973 to August 1973; 3 issues

The presence of '50s western stars Nighthawk and the Trigger Twins, as well as Johnny himself, didn't save this reprint mag from being cancelled after just 3 issues. Unless you spurn western comics without exception, this is worth your attention.
SW

Joker

DC May 1975 to October 1976; 9 issues

If the character inconsistencies in the Joker appearing here are marked down to his madness, this becomes a nice, if somewhat bizarre, series. Scripts were by O'Neil, Pasko and Maggin and the art mainly by Irv Novick. Most stories also starred another hero or villain, the best being the appearance of the Creeper in issue 3.
FP

Jonah Hex

DC From April 1977; 65 issues +; Spectacular 1978

The first 15 issues of this comic, written by Mike Fleischer (1-12) and David Michelinie, are nothing short of excellent, and although succeeding issues, all by Fleischer, have occasionally fallen below these high standards this has been a consistently good series. Good

issues include 8 and 9, which relate the origin of Jonah's deformity, his death in the 1978 Spectacular (which also included a new Batlash tale), a lovely flashback tale in 27, the 3-parter in 42-44 and 50, which is an excellent sampler for the whole series.
Key Issues: *1-15, 18, 24, 27-33, 40, 42-44, 46, 48-50, 56, 58, Spectacular.* ***FP***

Journey Into Mystery (1)

MARVEL June 1952 to August 1957 (48); November 1958 to February 1966; 125 issues; 1 annual 1965

The first 82 issues all contained short weird/fantasy stories.

Thor

83-125 In his 44-issue all-Lee-created run, Thor spent most of his time battling Loki and remonstrating with Odin, who would not let him reveal his love for Jane Foster because she was mortal. The early issues seem very antiquated now, but the latter ten are worth reading. Other good issues are 107 (the first Grey Gargoyle) and 114, 115 (first Absorbing Man). The best two are, undoubtedly, 110 and 111, featuring Cobra and Mr Hyde, two of Thor's better early villains. The book's title changes to Thor with issue 126.

Tales of Asgard

97-125 This series of 5-page back-up stories introduced and featured many characters in the Norse pantheon, along with their enemies. The tales were usually set in Thor's boyhood.
Key Issues: *110, 111* ***APS***

Journey Into Mystery (2)

MARVEL October 1972 to October 1975; 19 issues

This was Marvel's last attempt to provide new mystery tales in the colour comic format. It only lasted 5 issues before switching to the usual '50s reprint tales.
FP

Judomaster

CHARLTON (89) June 1966 to December 1967; 98 issues

The first 88 issues appeared under the titles of Six Gun Heroes and Gun Master. In the final months of World War II, Sgt Rip Jagger becomes the freebooting Judomaster. From his island base he and his band of raiders foil Japanese sabotage attempts in the South Pacific. The strip was the first martial arts strip to appear in comics, and was written and drawn by martial arts devotee Frank McLaughlin. Debuting in Charlton Special War Series 4, Judomaster proved to be one of Charlton's best. The back-up feature, a revival of Sarge Steel by Steve Skeates and Dick Giordano, was also excellent, making for an eminently readable comic.
SW

Jungle Action

MARVEL October 1972 to November 1976; 24 issues

The first 4 issues reprinted Jann of the Jungle and Lorna the Jungle Girl, and the 5th, Avengers 62. With issue 6 the Black Panther strip took over the book and Don McGregor began his epic "Panther's Rage" series, in which the Panther returned to his homeland to face a revolution led by the imposing Eric Killmonger. This tale ran until issue 18, taking the Panther all over his kingdom, Wakanda, portraying him with an exceptional realism and was one of Marvel's finest continued stories. Issue 19 saw the Panther back in the States and a story in which he fought the Ku Klux Klan. Sadly it was overwritten and, at times, boring. The story was unfinished with the title's cancellation, and was concluded, none too satisfactorily by Ed Hannigan in Marvel Premiere 51-53.
Key Issues: *6-18* ***FP***

Justice Inc.

DC June 1975 to December 1975; 4 issues

Using characters from the pulp novels of Kenneth Robeson, Justice Inc. related new tales and adapted some originals. The book was set in the '30s and starred a bunch of crimefighters led by the ashen-faced Avenger. Although it remained true to the feel of the pulps and despite the presence of Denny O'Neil and Jack Kirby, Justice Inc. wasn't any more than average.
FP

Justice League of America

DC From November 1960; 207 issues +

The first 65 issues of the JLA—the first silver age supergroup—were cleverly plotted and written by Gardner Fox with art by Mike Sekowsky until 63. The basic format in the earlier issues had the members dividing into groups in order to defeat simultaneous threats provided by their adversaries. Fox kept the stories interesting, although the heroes lacked characterisation. The traditional annual team-up with Earth 2's Justice Society of America first took place in 21-22 and really stood out. A new direction was initiated when Denny O'Neil (scripts 66-83) took over and shook up the complacency of the JLA. As well as producing good stories, he gave the heroes individual personalities, Green Arrow being the most drastically altered. O'Neil introduced an awareness of social problems which were later touched upon many a time by writer Mike Friedrich (86-99). His better stories though were pure adventure, eg 94 and the Starbreaker drama in 96-98. Len Wein produced a successful run of superhero adventures with excellent characterisation in 100-114 and as well as adding new members he brought back old characters such as the Seven Soldiers of Victory and the Freedom Fighters in his JLA/JSA team-ups. The comic went through an uneasy patch, with a variety of scripters, from 115-138 but was revived by Steve Englehart, who wrote 139-146 and 149-150 and produced the best run of stories seen here. He further developed the characters and introduced Marvel-like concepts never before attempted in the title. Things were dull for a while, but George Perez gave the book new artistic life from 184, when he took over from the late Dick Dillin, who had drawn all but 1½ issues since 64. The art must have also inspired Gerry Conway, as

he began to write some excellent stuff, including the origin of the Red Tornado (192-193) and the JLA and JSA versus the Secret Society of Super Villains in 195-197. Issue 200 was a spectacular in the truest sense, as it featured a battle between the original 7 leaguers and those who had joined since, written by Conway and drawn by 10 different artists. Issues 91-99 and 110-116 all featured golden age reprints.

Key Issues: *1-22, 29-31, 37, 38, 46, 47, 50, 51, 55-57, 59-61, 64-66, 68-75, 77-83, 91, 92, 94, 96-98, 100-114, 135-137, 139-146, 149, 150, 183-185, 189, 190, 192-197, 200.* ***HY***

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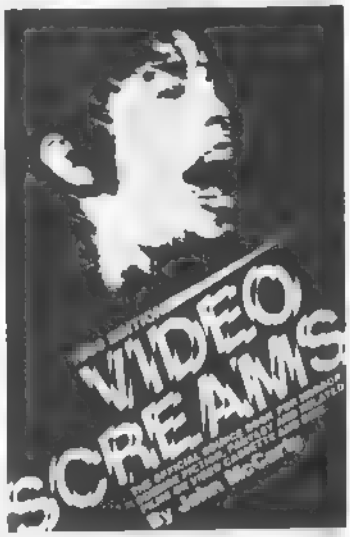

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Kamandi

DC November 1972 to October 1978; 59 issues

This was Jack Kirby's most successful series for DC. It went one better than Planet of the Apes and gave all animals intelligence. The stories all contained the type of way out concepts that have been associated with Kirby. The basic plot had Kamandi, the last boy on Earth after the Great Disaster, and his mutant and animal friends travelling around the world and encountering different mutated animal species. Kirby left the series at 40 and the tradition was only adequately handled until Jack C. Harris took over with 52 and produced the series' pinnacle. Harris's writing was surprisingly competent and he even introduced a subtle humour to the series in the form of dog versions of Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson. The comic was cancelled in the DC implosion and was one of the sadder losses.

Key Issues: *1-6, 12-16, 21-23, 26-29, 47-59. HY*

Karate Kid

DC April 1976 to August 1978; 15 issues

The martial arts expert from the Legion of Super-Heroes made it to the big time with his own comic set in the 20th century. The stories and the art weren't too impressive and Karate Kid was better off in the 30th century. *HY*

Ka-Zar (1)

MARVEL August 1970 to March 1971; 3 issues

This decidedly singular mag featured lead reprint tales of the title character backed up by original 11-page stories of unconnected heroes. Ka-Zar, the Tarzan imitation living/ruling in a prehistoric jungle hidden below sea level in Antarctica, had not had his own series before and so nearly all of his previous appearances (from X-Men, Daredevil, and Spider-Man) were reprinted here. The back-ups were Hercules (1), concluded in Sub-Mariner 29 and the Angel (2 & 3), concluded in Marvel Tales 30. If you want to buy this title for the reprints, fine, but the back-ups aren't worth it.

APS

Ka-Zar (2)

MARVEL January 1974 to February 1977; 20 issues

Continuing directly from his run in Astonishing Tales, Ka-Zar is returned to the Savage Land after a lengthy spell of adventures set in New York. The book stumbled and faltered from the very beginning, as well as being crippled by the musical writers/artists syndrome, it suffered from having no subplots, no supporting characters, little issue to issue continuity and transparently thin characterisation. Not until 14 did this change; Doug Moench spent the previous 4 issues going nowhere until producing a commendable last 7 issues. The story is literally cut off in midstream with the cancellation, but is concluded (none too satisfactorily) in X-Men 115.

APS

Ka-Zar (3)

MARVEL From April 1981; 19 issues +

Third time lucky for Marvel's jungle lord, whose adventures in the Savage Land and Pangea with his girlfriend, Shanna, show a couple running around in animal skins in a slightly different light to the turgid romance of most jungle scripts. Scripter Bruce Jones has really made a meal of Kevin and Shanna's bickering and wise-cracking and even has the supporting cast avoiding the "noble savage" syndrome. Brent Anderson's phenomenal layouts coupled with Jones' crisp, if languid, storylines make this one of Marvel's best current series.

Since 11 Ka-Zar's sabre tooth tiger, Zabu, has been featured in a back-up strip where Jones once again does wonders, this time to the tradition of the animal strip.

Key Issues: *5, 8, 10-12. SW*

Kid Colt, Outlaw

MARVEL August 1948 to March 1968 (139); November 1969 to May 1979; 229 issues; 3 GS January to July 1975

Another western hero, Kid Colt killed a man in self-defense during his youth and then fled in panic, thus becoming an outlaw. This is really a case of "once you've read one, you've read them all;" the stories are full of every western cliche ever imagined, with special emphasis on dead shot bad guys who can't fire a single

bullet straight when aiming at Kid Colt. With literally only a couple of exceptions, every issue from 140 on is a reprint of earlier material.
APS

King Conan

MARVEL From March 1980; 12 issues +

These giant-size adventures of the Cimmerian monarch, whose earlier life as a freebooting mercenary is featured in Conan the Barbarian, are based on Robert E. Howard's tales of Conan's later life. Scripts are by Roy Thomas and Doug Moench, with art, for the most part, by top Conan artist John Buscema, thus ensuring the same high-quality stuff that's made Conan's monthly mag so successful.
SW

Kobra

DC MArch 1976 to April 1977; 7 issues

This was an interesting series about Siamese twins who were surgically separated at birth. One twin grew up normally but the other, Kobra, became leader of the evil cult that raised him. Originated by Jack Kirby and carried through superbly by Martin Pasko, the plotline concentrated on the brothers opposing each other. The plotline was concluded in the Batman story in 5-Star Super-Hero Spectacular. Recommended.
Key Issues: 1-7. HY

Kona, Monarch of Monster Isle

DELL April 1962 to March 1967; 21 issues

Monster Isle is situated in a cavern beneath the sea-bed and contains a plethora of giant insects and animals. Kona, cock of the yard, has his hands full protecting a group of adventurers from the isle's inhabitants. Further strange creatures turn up when the crew abandoned Monster Isle for the surface world. Sam Glanzman wrote and drew this bizarre series. Early issues are written in a very odd manner and are out and out tracts of survival philosophy for the most part. An acquired taste, with the early issues being the best.
SW

Kong

DC July 1975 to March 1976; 5 issues

In 1975, DC introduced a line of fantasy titles and along with them came Kong, a blond caveman. He represented an attempt by DC to upgrade the image of the boring old caveman stories that had appeared since comics began; however, despite some lovely art by Alfredo Alcala, the stories were every bit as boring as previous cavemen.
FP

Korak

DC (46) June 1972 to March 1974 (56); June 1975 to October 1975; 59 issues

This title was inherited from Gold Key and continued their numbering. Under the guidance of Joe Kubert and Robert Kanigher, DC's son of Tarzan offered more than the usual jungle tales, sometimes entering the fantasy field. Excellent back-ups included Pellucidar (in 46) and Carson of Venus (46-56) by Len Wein and Mike Kaluta. The comic became Tarzan Family with 60.
Key Issues: 46-56. HY

The Krypton Chronicles

DC September 1981 to November 1981; 3 issues

A mini-series that explored the history of Krypton using Superman's ancestors as a focal point. Strangely, though, the ancestors were dealt with in reverse chronological order, with the first of the El family appearing last in the series. It was rather confusing, but still interesting and a must for Superman buffs.
HY

Kull

MARVEL June 1971 to September 1971 (2); July 1972 to August 1974 (15); August 1976 to October 1978; 29 issues

Marvel hoped to repeat the phenomenal success of Conan by using another of Robert E. Howard's barbarian heroes. However, Kull, a far more sombre and cerebral character, has never taken off in the same way, resisting 3 separate attempts to convert him to the coulour comics format. Barbarian fans might like the comic, but the uninitiated should try Conan first, since, apart from some nice John and Marie Severin art in early issues, there's not much to recommend this. The title changes from Kull the Conqueror to Kull the Destroyer with issue 11.
FP

Kung Fu Fighter

DC May 1975 to December 1977; 18 issues

DC entered the kung-fu fad far too late to make a good impression. The book got off to a reasonable start with fairly decent stories and art, but rapidly declined into mediocrity, with Denny O'Neil and Ric Estrada at their worst.
HY

Legion of Super-Heroes (1)

DC February 1973 to August 1973; 4 issues

This reprinted some of the great Legion Tales from Adventure (328, 333, 340-341) and Tommy Tomorrow back-ups. It was a trial run to see if the Legion deserved their own comic again. They did.
HY

Legion of Super-Heroes (2)

DC (259) From January 1980; 292 issues +

Carrying on the numbering from Superboy and the LSH, this series under Gerry Conway, Joe Staton and Jimmy Janes was an insult to the Legion and its fans. The only good issue during this time was 262, drawn by Jim Sherman. Roy Thomas slightly improved the quality with his origin of Wildfire in 283 being particularly good, but it wasn't until Paul Levitz and Pat Broderick took over with 284 that the Legion began to regain its former glory. Levitz and now regular artist Keith Giffen are both producing some really excellent comics. Happy days are back for Legion fans.
Key Issues: *262, 283-292.* ***HY***

Logan's Run

MARVEL January 1977 to July 1977; 7 issues

A close adaptation of the movie which was started by Gerry Conway but completed by Dave Kraft (2-5) with art by George Perez. The plot remained faithful to the film and is one of the best adaptations ever done in comics, with a good tight script and some of Perez's best art. With issue 6, a new team of John Warner and Tom Sutton took over the book, but before they could get into their stride the book was cancelled for contractual reasons.
Key Issues: *1-5.* ***DWC***

Lois Lane

DC April 1958 to February 1974 (136); October 1974; 137 issues; 2 Annuals 1962, 1963

The stories from the early to mid-'60s were the sort of stuff associated with all the Superman-related comics at the time—all pure, simple, light-hearted fun, showing Lois' rivalry with Lana Lang for Superman's love and attempting to discover Superman's secret identity. Towards the end of the '60s some stories became more serious. There was a nice period of relevance from 105-124 and the series was incorporated into Jack Kirby's New Gods trilogy and was also connected to the Rose and Thorn back-up strip. Other interesting developments included the apparent death of Lucy Lane, Lois' sister, and issue 121 which had Lois leaving the Daily Planet staff and is probably the best LL tale ever written. Strangely, though, this great direction was never developed and the book soon declined into mediocrity, with some really ridiculous stories. The comic was eventually cancelled, with the strip moving into Superman Family.
Key Issues: *106, 110, 111, 115, 118-121.* ***HY***

Lost In Space

GOLD KEY/WHITMAN (37) October 1973 to November 1978 (54); March 1981 to April 1982; 59 issues

The further adventures of Space Family Robinson on Space Station One, with more average stories and more Dan Spiegle artwork. The revival was handled by Whitman comics, Gold Key's successors.
FP

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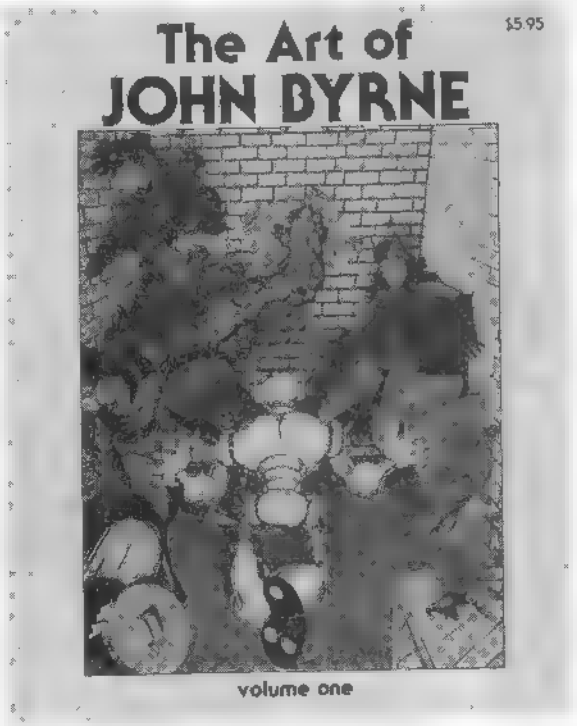

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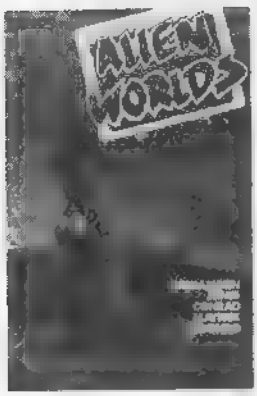

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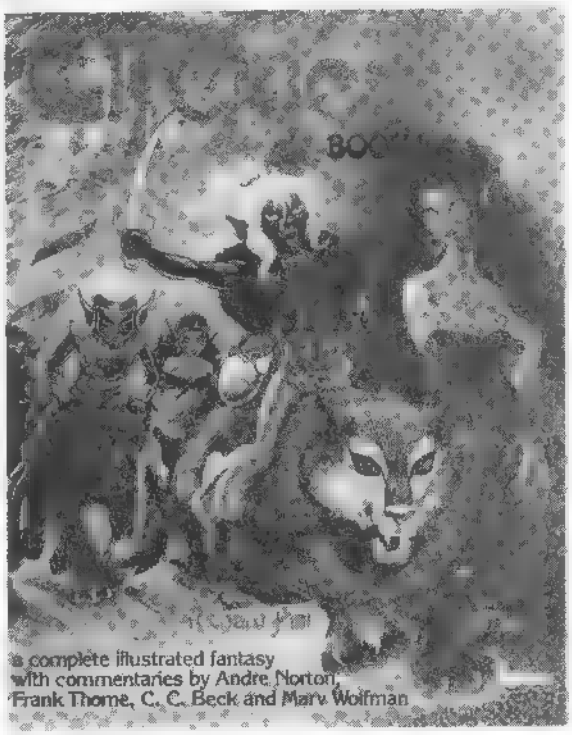

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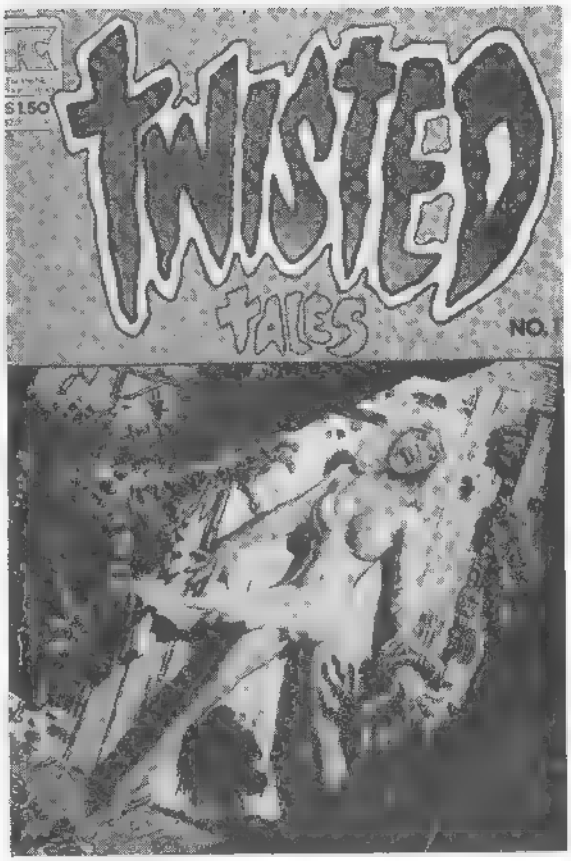

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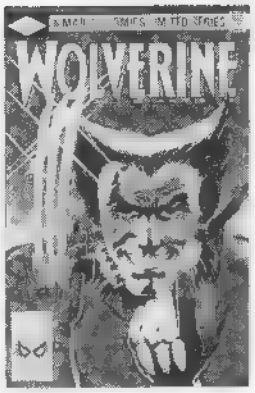

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Machine Man

MARVEL April 1978 to December 1978 (9); August 1979 to February 1981, 19 issues

Machine Man was created by Jack Kirby in the last few issues of 2001 and was given his own title when 2001 was cancelled. As is usual with much of Kirby's later work for Marvel, the character was a good idea, but suffered from pedestrian treatment and was cancelled. After a short time, the character was revived under Marv Wolfman and Steve Ditko, who did a creditable job with some whimsical stories and gave the book a nice early '60s feel. With issue 15, Tom DeFalco took over the writing, continued the offbeat look and injected some shy humour into the character. Although never outstanding, the last 10 issues make for relaxing reading.
DWC

Madame Xanadu

DC 1981; 1 issue

This eagerly awaited "fan" publication reunited Steve Englehart and Marshall Rogers for a 1-shot story centering on those subjects Englehart likes best: the Tarot, demonology and drugs. Ironically, it will be remembered more for the touching 7-page sf back-up tale by Marc DeMatteis and Brian Bolland rather than the slightly disappointing lead feature.
APS

Madhouse

RED CIRCLE (95) September 1974 to January 1975; 97 issues

After appearing under various titles in the Archie line, this humour title was taken over by Gray Morrow's Red Circle comics and became a horror anthology title. Some very nice stories here, especially "Demon Kiss" in 96, written and drawn by Bruce Jones.
***Key Issues:** 96. SW*

Magnus, Robot Fighter

GOLD KEY February 1963 to January 1977; 46 issues

Raised from the cradle by all-wise robot 1A, Magnus combats renegade robots in an otherwise idyllic 40th century. Russ Manning wrote and drew the first 29 issues (with Mike Royer assisting toward the end of the Manning tenure) and never put a foot wrong. The back-up, Aliens, was given its own comic in the '70s. From 29 on all issues but 42 and 44 are reprints.
SW

Man-Bat

DC January 1976 to March 1976; 2 issues

After a few successful appearances in Batman and Detective, Kirk Langstrom, user of a serum that transformed him into a human bat, was given his own series. The first issue by Conway and Ditko was bad. The second by Pasko and Marcos was very good, but for the best Man-Bat stories see the Batman Family.
***Key Issues:** 2. FP*

Mandrake

KING September 1966 to November 1967; 10 issues

Lee Falk's master magician came in for some abysmal treatment here with poor stories and indifferent art. Issue 8 contains some early Jeff Jones art and 10 has an Alex Raymond reprint, but there's nothing else of interest here.
FP

Man From Atlantis

MARVEL February 1978 to August 1978; 7 issues

Developed from a none-too-interesting TV series of the same name, this concerned a man who could breathe underwater and was allegedly from Atlantis. Marvel created some new stories and adapted some, but the creative team of Bill Mantlo and Frank Robbins didn't seem to have much commitment or inspiration and the book was cancelled shortly after the TV series. Issue 1 was Marvel's first attempt at a regular format book priced at a dollar.
FP

Man-Thing (1)

MARVEL January 1974 to October 1975; 22 issues; 5 GS August 1974 to August 1975.

Continuing directly from the Fear issues, Steve Gerber

expanded on his scripting here to experiment with weirder and more outrageous ideas. Being as it is impossible to characterize Man-Thing himself, Gerber's (successful) line of attack was to give personality and depth to the supporting characters and then examine how Man-Thing reacted to their actions and, specifically, emotions. The strip's suitability for either straight super-hero, science fantasy or human nature was a great asset; some issues failed, but this was inevitable as he was always trying out more and more offbeat storylines. Giant Size 4 and 5 are best remembered for the first 2 solo Howard the Duck stories; in the case of issue 4 this is a virtual travesty of justice as words are completely inadequate to describe the magnificent Man-Thing lead story.
Key Issues:** 2-6, 11, 16-18, GS 1-5. **APS

Man-Thing (2)

MARVEL November 1979 to July 1981; 11 issues

Mike Fleisher wrote the first 3 issues as if he didn't care about the strip at all. Chris Claremont then took over, but never quite came to terms with the series. Although, like Steve Gerber in the first series, he also concentrated on supporting characters and Man-Thing's reaction to them, he never really succeeded. This seemed to be because, whereas Man-Thing was an indispensable part of Gerber's scripts, Claremont's issues gave the feel that they could easily have been rewritten with very few modifications so as to exclude him entirely. Issue 9 is worth the price for the cover alone and those few of you out there who remember War is Hell will appreciate number 10.
Key Issues:** 10. **APS

M.A.R.S. Patrol

GOLD KEY July 1965 to August 1969; 10 issues

The first 2 issues were titled Total War "featuring the fighting four of M.A.R.S. Patrol." Lt Cy Adams, Sgt Joe Striker, Cpl Russ Stacy and Sgt Ken Hiro are military specialists for the Marine Attack and Rescue Service, and the strip is '60s military paranoia with a twist. The Earth is invaded by alien troops and it's the job of Adams and his men to thwart the attempts of the aliens to take over. The twist? The men from M.A.R.S. vs the Men from Mars. The first 3 issues are written and superbly drawn by Wally Wood, with a further 7 by Dan Spiegle following. The series would have been validated by some kind of conclusion, but as it is, the first issues have better continuity than the later ones.
Key Issues:** 1-3. **SW

Marvel Adventure

MARVEL December 1975 to October 1976; 6 issues

This reprints Daredevil 22-27 in edited form. They're all Stan Lee/Gene Colan stories and feature a continuing storyline involving the Masked Marauder. They also have the Gladiator, Leapfrog, Stiltman and the introduction of Mike Murdock.
FP

Marvel and DC Present

MARVEL/DC 1982; 1 issue

This features the X-Men/Teen Titans team-up. The usual problems with company team-ups is that much valuable space is wasted in explaining the powers and backgrounds of characters who are familiar to one set of readers but not the other. A redeeming feature of this book is that Chris Claremont has meshed these details smoothly into the story. As such, he has failed to see the wood for the trees, and has neglected to explain many of Jack Kirby's New Gods/Apokalips concepts. Many incidents in the plot were incomprehensible to me, and to others I've spoken to who haven't a thorough knowledge of the New Gods. This spoils an otherwise very enjoyable tale. The teaming of the X-Men and Teen Titans is well handled and the combination of Dark Phoenix (resurrected in the most tasteful manner possible), Darkseid and the Terminator provided sufficient variety and manoeuverability in the conflict with the "X-Titans." Walt Simonson's art is first-rate and there are some admirable colour effects from Glynis Wein.
APS

Marvel Chillers

MARVEL October 1975 to October 1976; 7 issues

Modred the Mystic, an apprentice of Merlin, set in suspended animation until the 20th century, starred in the first 2 issues and is best forgotten. 3-7 featured Tigra, originally the Cat (Greer Nelson) but transformed, quite literally this time, into a cat-person in Giant Size Creatures 1. Although 4 was a fill-in, the others by Isabella and Shooter evinced a strong, solid plotline complemented by an excellent portrayal of Tigra's attempts to come to terms with her 2 different personalities.
Key Issues:** 3, 5-7. **APS

Marvel Collectors' Item Classics

MARVEL 1965 (1); April 1966 to August 1969, 22 issues

This reprint title contains Fantastic Four (more or less from the beginning), Hulk (first series) and also Iron Man and Dr Strange from where their strips began in Tales of Suspense and Strange Tales respectively. The title changed to Marvel's Greatest Comics with 23.
APS

Marvel Double Feature

MARVEL December 1973 to March 1977; 21 issues

This reprints the Iron Man and Captain America stories from the latter 20 odd issues of Tales of Suspense.
APS

Marvel Fanfare

MARVEL From March 1982; 4 issues +

The title Fanfare describes this title's raison d'etre. Marvel has all sorts of inventory stories to be used as

fill-ins, many of which became compromised by continuity in the strip where they were to appear. Along comes editor Al Milgrom and says "I'll bet your average fan would like to read these stories anyway" and sets about commissioning a sequel to a Spider-Man/Angel/Ka-Zar story originally intended for Marvel Team-Up and various pin-up style covers. The above mentioned story, written by Chris Claremont and drawn by Mike Golden, Dave Cockrum and Paul Smith, appeared in 1-4. So did numerous short back-ups from the files featuring Daredevil, Mr Fantastic, Hawkeye, Deathlok and Iron Man.
SW

Marvel Feature (1)

MARVEL December 1971 to November 1973; 12 issues

Another of Marvel's tryout comics, the first 2 issues were 48 pages and 1 had a Dr Strange back-up story in which he returned to his role as a sorcerer after having abandoned it in Hulk 126. The lead features in 1-3, however, were the first 3 appearances of the Defenders (Hulk, Sub-Mariner and Dr Strange) by Roy Thomas and Ross Andru, 2 easily being the best. 4-10 featured Ant-Man in a very strange solo series. Written by Mike Friedrich, there were some original ideas overall, such as having Hank Pym retrospectively narrate the whole series in the first person. Unfortunately, nearly all the individual stories were quite unbelievable, having concepts, plots and dialogue that would insult the intelligence of a 7-year-old. 11 and 12 were the first 2 Thing team-up stories, both drawn by Jim Starlin, 12 being yet another corollary of the Thanos War.
Key Issues: *2.* ***APS***

Marvel Feature (2)

MARVEL November 1975 to November 1976; 7 issues

First introduced as a supporting character in Conan, Red Sonja's popularity won her her own colour series. As a young girl, she was transformed into a warrior by a goddess after her home and family had been pillaged and slain and she herself raped. The goddess enforced a condition that she could allow no man to love her unless he had defeated her in fair combat. Written by Jones and drawn by Thorne, this series suffers from very ordinary plotting and cartoonish art, especially in Thorne's rendition of people. A few odd human touches occur which are really quite nice, but never for more than two or three pages an issue, if at all. Red Sonja continues in her own title.
APS

Marvel Premiere

MARVEL April 1972 to August 1981; 61 issues

This title was designed as a tryout series, featuring a different lead character every few issues. Although the first 2 issues starred Warlock this concept was not put into effect until issue 26 as Dr Strange (3-14) and Iron Fist (15-25) ran for several issues until they each continued into their own titles. Issue 3 contains a lovely, surreal story with exquisit Barry Smith art, but thereafter followed a horribly convoluted and often senseless plotline by Gardner Fox, which was mercifully laid to rest by Steve Englehart. He and Frank Brunner then went on to produce what was, if you're not offended by the religious implications, an excellent time travel story. 15 saw the beginning of Daniel Rand, a youth who had entered the mystic city of K'un Lun and had been taught Oriental fighting skills by the race of immortals who dwelt there. The gateway to this city appears for one day every 10 years atop the Himalayas and thus, 10 years later Daniel Rand, now Iron Fist, dutifully went back into the big bad world to exact his revenge on the man who murdered his father. It took four issues to tell his origin and another five to resolve the complications created in those four. Despite all the cliches outlined above, it was all actually quite good, but, being a continued storyline, one is left to wonder how much better it could have been if any one writer had been able to stay with it for more than 3 issues. From 26 the originally intended showcase format actually started and there followed a series of somewhat daft ideas, such as the Legion of Monsters in 28. Since then the book has produced a number of very good stories, the best of which are: Woodgod (31), by Bill Mantlo, Howie Chaykin's sf bounty hunter, Monark Starstalker (32), Weirdworld by Doug Moench and Mike Ploog (38), Seeker 3000, a good sf story by Moench and Tom Sutton and Jack of Hearts by Mantlo in 44. 45 and 46 tied up the plotlines from the Man-Wolf series by Dave Kraft and George Perez and 47 and 48 starred a new Ant-Man by David Michelinie and John Byrne. Alice Cooper starred in a story by Ed Hannigan and Tom Sutton (50); an excellent western hero by the name of Caleb Hammer, written by Peter Gillis, appeared in 54 and 56 printed a story by Len Wein and Howie Chaykin about Dominc Fortune that had been lying around at Marvel for 3 years. The next four issues reprinted Dr Who from British Marvel in colour for the first time, and the title culminated with a majestic Starlord tale by Doug Moench and Tom Sutton.
Key Issues: *1, 12-14, 31, 32, 38, 41, 44-48, 50, 54, 56, 61.*
APS/DWC

Marvel Presents

MARVEL October 1975 to August 1977; 12 issues

The first two issues of this title starred Bloodstone, a John Warner creation best forgotten. The Guardians of the Galaxy, who had debuted in Marvel Super-heroes 18 and had been featured in GS Defenders 5 and Defenders 26-29, took over with 3. Steve Gerber scripted a fine serial in 3-7, the best individual issue being 5, where the Guardians land on a planet that serves as a cosmic lunatic asylum. Later issues by Roger Stern were also of a very high standard, making this one of Marvel's best short run titles. Issue 8 was a reprint and loose plotlines were tied up in Thor annual 6.
Key Issues: *3-7, 9-12.* ***FP***

Marvel Spectacular

MARVEL August 1973 to November 1975; 19 issues

Reprints '60s Thor stories, commencing with Thor 128.
APS

Marvel Spotlight (1)

MARVEL November 1971 to April 1977; 33 issues

Another showcase title that was never as good as its sister title Premiere, the idea being to try out already established characters. Of interest are the 3-issue run of Werewolf by Night (2-4) by Gerry Conway, Mike Friedrich and Mike Ploog, and a solo Sub-Mariner story in 27, which served as a kind of origin for Deathlok. Sandwiched between these issues were a Ghost Rider series (5-11) and the origin of the Son of Satan and 12 more solo tales (12-24). Neither was particularly innovative or entertaining, nor was the Scarecrow tale in 26. Moon-Knight starred in an over-gimmicky two-parter by Doug Moench and Don Perlin in 28 and 29 and Jim Starlin and Howie Chaykin gave a reason for Nick Fury's seemingly eternal youth in 31. Archie Goodwin introduced Spider-Woman in 32, giving her a plausible origin which was subsequently ignored by Marv Wolfman in her own title. 33 tied up plotlines from Deathlok's series in Astonishing titles.
***Key Issues:** 2-4, 27-29, 31, 32. DWC*

Marvel Super Action

MARVEL May 1977 to April 1979 (13); December 1979 to December 1981; 38 issues

Its first incarnation reprinted Captain America stories from 100 on. 12 and 13 reprint the first two Steranko issues (with pages cut) if you can't afford the originals. Its revival reprinted Avengers 55-77, continuing these reprints from where the deceased Marvel Triple Action had left off. From 27, most issues also carried a back-up strip featuring Hulk stories previously seen only in UK comics.
APS

Marvel Super-Hero Contest of Champions

MARVEL June 1982 to August 1982; 3 issues

Produced as a limited series, this story allegedly features every Marvel hero. Sure enough, they're all there, if somewhat indistinct, on pages 12 and 13 of issue 1. After that only two teams of 12 characters are used in a story involving the acquisition of hidden quarters of a golden globe which will restore the Collector to life should the Grand-Master's team win. They don't, but luckily none of the omnipotents present notice, and neither did the editor. It's all good light reading, and introduces 6 new heroes. There also a two-page text feature in each issue listing every Marvel hero's first appearance and abilities.
FP

Marvel Super-Heroes

MARVEL October 1966 (1); (12) December 1967 to November 1971; (31) September 1972 to January 1982; 105 issues

Number 1 is completely independent of the others; it was brought out as a one-off issue and reprinted Daredevil's origin with golden age back-ups. In the mag's second run, the numbering continued directly from Fantasy Masterpieces (1). All 64 pages, the format of 12-20 was an original lead feature (different characters every issue) backed up by golden age reprints. 12 and 13 were the first 2 appearances of Captain Marvel, but apart from introducing all the characters, the issues were fairly nondescript. The best original stories were Spider-Man (14), Black Knight (17) and Guardians of the Galaxy in 18 (origin and first appearance). The most noteworthy golden age reprints were the All-Winners Squad in 17 and 18. The book became an all post-1960 reprint with 21, reprinting Daredevil 2-11, X-Men 2-8, Iron Man (from Tales of Suspense 74-77) plus early Hulk stories from the original Tales to Astonish. With its third run it reprinted complete issues of Tales to Astonish (1) from about number 75. After these ended, the Hulk stories continued sequentially from his own book up to 157. Some spoof tales from Not Brand Echh and new spoof splashes by Stern and Austin were also included as back-ups in a few of the last issues.
***Key Issues:** 18.*

Marvel Tales

MARVEL 1964 to 1965 (2); From July 1966; 144 issues +

Issues 1-32 were 64 pages, although the first 2 went under the title of Marvel Tales Annual and reprinted the origins of many of the super-heroes existing in 1965. From 3-27, the reprints were Spider-Man (virtually from the start) plus the first 25 stories of Thor and the Human Torch from Journey into Mystery (1) and Strange Tales, respectively. 28-32 reprint 2 Spider-Man stories each and 30 has an all-new, fairly bad Angel story continued from Ka-Zar (1) 3. With 33 the title changed to the conventional 32-page format, reprinting Spider-Man stories up to Spider-Man 159 in issue 136. From then on, the Spider-Man reprints have been started from the very beginning, with Amazing Fantasy 15 being retold in 137. As they are all unedited, they provide an excellent opportunity to acquire those early tales cheaply. Several interesting back-ups have been thrown up by this title, such as the all-new Hawkeye/Two-Gun Kid story by Scott Edelman and Mike Nasser in 100. 131-133 reprinted Captain Britain 1 and 2 (not previously published in the US) and 134-137 reprinted Dr Strange's first four appearances from Strange Tales.
APS

Marvel Team-Up

MARVEL From March 1972; 122 issues +; 5 Annuals 1976, 1979 to 1982

The inconsistencies and lack of continuity between this title and Amazing Spider-Man give the impression that the Spider-Man character featured here is a completely different character from the one is his own book. All bar 9 issues have guest-starred another hero with Spider-Man. The others have featured either Hulk or Human Torch team-ups. In general, this book has suffered far more than its sister title Marvel Two-In-One. Although some early issues by Conway were distinctly good, the scripting hit a low point with issue 12 and promptly

headed in a downward direction. 28 is worth mentioning as an all-time Conway classic in which Manhattan island is towed out into the Atlantic and held for ransom. Bill Mantlo took over with 38 and effected a distinct improvement which Claremont continued from 57. However, the latter's heart never seemed to in the strip and the quality varied tremendously from issue to issue. 79 (Red Sonja) was very tactfully handled and in my opinion 82-85 (Black Widow) are the best four issues of the title. After Claremont's departure in 89, the comic degenerated into a series of abysmal fill-ins. A stable author did not materialize until Marc DeMatteis took over with 111. However, to date, improvements in quality have been barely noticeable.
Key Issues: *1-4, 25, 53, 54, 59, 60, 63, 64, 68-70, 79, 82-85, 100, 119.* ***APS***

Marvel Two-In-One

MARVEL From January 1974; 92 issues +; 7 Annuals 1976 to 1982

By their own nature, team-up books like this are very difficult to write well. The presence of a (usually) different guest star teaming up with the Thing every issue is not conducive to multi-part storylines and makes each issue seem like a fill-in. Nevertheless Steve Gerber succeeded in the first 7 issues because he correctly grasped the Thing's artful sense of humour instead of turning him into a continuous wise cracking machine and also because he used and maintained several supporting characters. After that the book fell into all the traps that team-up books do, the issues in the teens being the absolute nadir. It wasn't until Mark Gruenwald and Ralph Macchio took over that things looked up. They provided a perfect example to all other writers of how to handle such a book, with beautiful plotting and excellent handling of the guest stars. From 75, Tom DeFalco has been at the helm, but has produced nothing significant except for the Sandman issue (86). Annual 2 by Jim Starlin is the end to the Thanos series; not the best story of that run, but still excellent.
Key Issues: *1-7, 10, 42, 43, 51, 53-58, 60-67, 69-74, Annual 2.* ***APS***

Marvel's Greatest Comics

MARVEL (23) October 1969 to March 1979 (82); December 1979 to January 1981; 96 issues

Carrying on directly from Marvel Collector's Item Classics, issues 23-34 were giant sized and continued reprinting Fantastic Four, Iron Man, and Dr Strange and started on Captain America's early stories from Tales of Suspense. From 35 on, the book became a 32-page Fantastic Four reprint title; 116 being the last issue reprinted before cancellation struck a second time.
APS

Master of Kung-Fu

MARVEL (17) From April 1974; 117 issues +; 4 GS September 1974 to June 1975; 1 Annual 1976

The first issue is 17, as the title changes from Special Marvel Edition, where two previous Shang-Chi stories appeared. The series about the son of Fu Manchu was created by Steve Englehart and Jim Starlin at the height of the kung-fu craze, but they made sure it transcended the cliche. The comic later fell into the hands of Doug Moench, who infused it with an intricate balance of philosophy and characterisation without neglecting the obligatory action. He also introduced two of the finest supporting characters in comics, Leiko Wu and Clive Reston, while retaining and improving on Black Jack Tarr and Denis Nayland-Smith from Englehart's cast. The arrival of Paul Gulacy as artist resulted in some of the finest comics of the 1970s. Particularly worth mentioning are the 3-part Mordillo story (33-35), the classic Cat tale in 38 and 39 and the story that won an Eagle Award as best continued story of 1976, in 40 and 42-51. Sadly Gulacy left with issue 50 and although the scripts have remained consistently excellent, the art has never reached the same plateau. That's not to diminish the work of Mike Zeck and, currently, Gene Day though. Both have produced some fine art. In the listing of high spots it should be noted that a merely average issue of MOKF is still likely to be one of the top five comics in any given month, such is the standard of writing, so in this case the list is compiled by that standard rather than by a general one.
Key Issues: *29-31, 33-35, 38-40, 42-52, 71, 77-89, 96-98, 100, 105-107, 109-111, 114-117.* ***FP***

Men of War

DC August 1977 to March 1980; 26 issues

This was an average war comic which differed in that its main feature 'Code Name Gravedigger' starred a black soldier who was used as a special agent. The earlier issues by David Michelinie weren't too bad. Back-up features have included Enemy Ace, Dateline: Frontline and Rosa, Master Spy.
HY

Metal Men

DC May 1963 to January 1970 (41); March 1973 to August 1973 (44); May 1976 to March 1978; 56 issues

After a successful run in Showcase the series was granted its own comic book, produced by creator Robert Kanigher and Ross Andru. The Metal Men were "robots" created by Doc Magnus and consisted of Gold, Lead, Platinum, Iron, Mercury and Tin. They were later joined by Nameless, Tin's girlfriend and female counterpart. Each metal man had a personality and abilities that corresponded to its metal, eg Mercury was hot tempered and able to split his body apart and Tin was timid and not too strong. These were very entertaining and light-hearted stories, and the villains were usually creatures made of other metals or chemicals or plastics. The series underwent a drastic change in 53, when the stories became more serious, with Doc Magnus going mad and the Metal Men being hunted down by the authorities and eventually being ordered to be destroyed. They were eventually saved by a man who gave them human identities and employed them as agents. This was not the direction intended for the original Metal Men, but it was well handled nonetheless

by Mike Sekowsky. The first revival was for 3 reprint issues, but the second revival initiated by Steve Gerber and carried on by Marty Pesko and Gerry Conway returned the team to their familiar metal bodies and produced some entertaining stories drawn by Walt Simonson and Joe Staton.
Key Issues: *14-17, 19, 21-34, 37, 39-41, 45-47.* ***HY***

Metamorpho

DC August 1965 to April 1968; 17 issues

After a successful tryout in Brave and the Bold, Metamorpho was given his own comic. This was a fine, light-hearted, inventive and somewhat tongue-in-cheek series (by writer Bob Hanley and artist Ramona Fradon) about the man who could change his body into any element or structure. Great supporting characters included Sapphire Stagg (Metamorpho's girlfriend), Simon Stagg (her wealthy, scheming father who was using Metamorpho for his own purposes), Java (a stone age man brought back to life by Stagg) and Metamorpho's female counterpart and other romantic interest, Element Girl. A nice entertaining series that was unfortunately cancelled halfway through a story.
Key Issues: *9, 10, 12-17.* ***HY***

Microbots

GOLD KEY December 1971; 1 issue

After being cryogenically frozen, young Jeff Micron awoke in the future and faced a new world, accompanied by the microbots, indestructable working robots created by his father. Not much thought was put into this. The artwork was pedestrian and the actual microbots looked as if they had been designed by a 5-year-old with building bricks.
FP

Micronauts

MARVEL From January 1979; 46 issues +; 2 Annuals 1979, 1980

One of Bill Mantlo's best creations, the characters are based on Mego toys and the series could be summed up as the Inhumans meet Star Wars. The first 12 issues followed a rebellion against Baron Karza led by the Micronauts; the strong plot and characterisation are greatly enhanced by the art of Mike Golden. With issue 13 Howie Chaykin took over the art and couldn't match his predecessor's work. This, together with a series of totally aimless plots meant a decline in quality for the next few issues. Pat Broderick's arrival as artist (19) and the subsequent resurrection of Baron Karza (25) made the comic more interesting, and they led up to a fine, if somewhat confusing six-part story guest starring Dr Strange in 30-35. Gil Kane is the most recent artist on the title, and he doesn't seem to have much enthusiasm for the job. The whole series has been written by Bill Mantlo.
Key Issues: *1-12.* ***DWCFP***

Mighty Comics Presents

MIGHTY (40) November 1966 to October 1967; 50 issues

The numbering for this title was continued from Fly-Man. The comic showcased various heroes from the Mighty stable, and must be a serious contender for the most pathetic run of comics ever produced. Insipid heroes, inane plots, ludicrous dialogue and poor art were the constituents of the above average stories here. Only the strips featuring the Web (40, 43, 46, 50), a non-powered hero with a wife who nagged him about his crime-fighting activities, stand out among the dross.
FP

Mighty Crusaders

MIGHTY November 1965 to October 1966; 7 issues

This was a further step in Mighty's policy of attempting to cash in on the success of super-powered characters being produced elsewhere. First appearing in Flyman 31, the Comet, Black Hood, Shield, Fly Man and Fly Girl were lumped together as the Mighty Crusaders and duplicated the Avengers (right down to the costumes) in every respect save quality. Reading this is a truly painful experience; the sort of sentence you'd wish to inflict upon your worst enemy. Utterly contemptible stories (plots is far too good a word to use) were complemented by totally ridiculous dialogue. If you haven't got the message yet, this wasn't very good and neither was Steel Sterling, who commandeered the title for the final issue.
APS

The Mighty Hercules

GOLD KEY July 1963 to October 1963; 2 issues

This Hercules was an angularly drawn character based on a TV cartoon series. The comic stories tended to reflect the juvenile origins. Set in ancient Greece, Hercules shared adventures with his friend Helena, a small centaur named Newton and a satyr called Tewt.
FP

Mighty Marvel Western

MARVEL October 1968 to September 1976; 46 issues

This was a giant-size reprint title that featured Rawhide Kid and Two-Gun Kid in every issue, with Kid Colt in 1-25 and Matt Slade in 25-46. In general the reprints were longer stories of the characters, which made for more interesting plots. If you want to sample a typical Marvel western comic, this is the one.
FP

Mighty Samson

GOLD KEY July 1964 to November 1969 (20); August 1972 (21); December 1973 to March 1976; 31 issues

Post-holocaust adventure with Samson and his companions Mindor and Sharmine. The resemblence to the later Hercules Unbound from DC is too strong not to be mentioned, although the quality of this title is

considerably lower as Jack Sparling hacks out one issue after another.
SW

Mister Miracle

DC April 1971 to March 1974 (18); September 1977 to September 1978; 25 issues

Another superb title that was originally part of Jack Kirby's New Genesis/Apokalips trilogy. Scott Free—Mr Miracle, super escape artist, battled Darkseid (ruler of Apokalips) and his servants Granny Goodness, Vermin Vunderbar, Dr Bedlam, etc. with his girlfriend (and later wife) Big Barda, an ex-Apokalips warrior, and Oberon, his midget assistant. Kirby was at the height of his career and captured a real sense of epic and excitement with his amazing concepts. Issue 9, relating Scott Free's origin, is a real classic but unfortunately from issue 12 the book became more super-hero oriented and featured tales unrelated to the trilogy and slowly declined in quality, improving only in time for Mr Miracle's wedding in 18. The series returned under the guidance of Steve Englehart with Marshall Rogers art, to be followed by the team of Steve Gerber and Mike Golden. Naturally with all this talent the revival was well handled and very impressive, but somehow it just wasn't Jack Kirby's Mr Miracle. Great stuff nonetheless and a series no one should be without.
Key Issues: *1-13, 18-22, 24, 25.* ***HY***

Monsters on the Prowl

MARVEL (9) February 1971 to November 1973; (27) June 1974 to October 1974; 30 issues

The numbering on this title continued from Chamber of Darkness. It reprinted the slightly longer than normal horror stories from the '50s with such marvelous titles as "I Defied Gomdullah, the Living Mummy" (in 12 if you really want to know). Issues 9-13 contained one new tale and Steve Englehart's first comic story was in 15. 16 started King Kull. ***FP***

Moon Knight

MARVEL From November 1980; 24 issues +

Doug Moench's creation is Marvel's nearest equivalent to the Batman, being independently wealthy and primarily a thinking athlete. After his premiere appearance in Werewolf by Night 32-33 he was given a solo tryout in Marvel Spotlight (1) 28 and 29, leading to a back-up series illustrated by Bill Sienkiewicz in the Hulk colour magazine. The creative team has remained on the first few issues of Moon Knight's own title. The first few issues were excellent, evoking the mood of the '30s Batman and combining it with the sophistication of today. However, since then Moench's attempts to portray Moon Knight as a hero on a real world as opposed to a hero on Marvel-Earth have resulted in tedious scripts that resemble a typical TV show.
Key Issues: *1-5, 7-10, 14, 23.* ***FP***

Morlock 2001

ATLAS February 1975 to July 1975; 3 issues

Set in an Orwellian 1984 society, Morlock was an artificial man grown from a plant and able to transform himself into a hideous monster. A rather directionless series that, while enjoyable, didn't really explore the setting and suffered from the Atlas overdose of gratuitous violence. Worth getting if you've a surplus of cash.
FP

Ms Marvel

MARVEL January 1977 to April 1979; 23 issues

When Carol Danvers' dying wishes were fed into a nearby Kree psyche-magnitron, she became a female copy of the Kree Captain Marvel, with similar powers and a limited precognitive sixth sense. Gerry Conway doomed this strip with the first 2 issues. The parallels between Carol and Linda "Supergirl" Danvers and the female counterpart to Mar-vell/Superman bit made his intentions a little too obvious: to do a DC heroine in a Marvel Comic. Although flawed, the strip has many redeeming features: Chris Claremont made a brave effort with his characterisations and was helped on his way by some sturdy artwork from Jim Mooney (yes, the Supergirl artist), Carmine Infantino and 2 issue wonder Dave Cockrum. A good comic to read with the occasional issues-worth of nice artwork.
Key Issues: *20.* ***SW***

My Greatest Adventure

DC February 1955 to February 1964; 85 issues

This was a title that offered dull adventure, science-fiction and mystery stories until the Doom Patrol took over from issue 80. They were so successful that the title changed to Doom Patrol with issue 86.
Key Issues: *80-85.* ***HY***

Mysterious Suspense

CHARLTON October 1968; 1 issue

This was a fully extended 25-page story which featured the Question, a Spirit/Creeper character, after his appearances as a back-up in Blue Beetle. Steve Ditko produced a story that managed to avoid the comic cliches of long fights, etc. A book that deserves to be well remembered.
Key Issue: *1.* ***DWC***

Mystery in Space

DC May 1951 to September 1966 (110); September 1980 to March 1981; 117 issues

For the majority of its '60s run Mystery in Space featured the adventures of Adam Strange—an Earthman transported by zeta beam across 25 trillion miles of space to Ranagar, where he battled any planet-shaking menace that reared its ugly head alongside his Ranagarian beloved, Alanna. Gardner Fox and Carmine Infantino gave five years of consistent good taste and quality to this, DC's best ever science-fiction strip.

Early issues have between 8 and 15 pages featuring Adam and he is accompanied by many short features by DC's best; notably Sid Greene's Star Rovers. Sadly the last 20 issues don't match up to the departed Fox/Infantino magic and features like Ultra the Multi-Alien should be scrupulously avoided. There's a Justice League team up with Adam Strange in 75, and it's worth mentioning that Murphy Anderson did some superlative inking on most of Infantino's stories. DC revived the title in 1980 as a showcase for science fiction short stories. Despite several distinguished strips by the likes of Marshall Rogers and Joe Kubert, the comic was cancelled

Key Issues: *53-58, 65, 66, 68, 72-86, 90, 91. SW*

Naza

DELL January 1964 to March 1966; 9 issues

The adventures of a stone-age warrior didn't sell back in the '60s either. Bad stuff
SW

Neutro

DELL January 1967; 1 issue

2 scientists unearth the component parts of a giant robot buried on earth by aliens years previously. They construct the robot and there follows a 4-page sequence of 1-panel illustrations displaying what the robot can do. After that there's a 2-page sequence detailing what the robot might conceivably do should he fall under control of wrongdoers. The remainder of the issue shows various wrongdoers attempting to gain control of the robot via radio waves. The only action made by the robot during the whole issue is to break some chains and fly out of a cave. A truly execrable comic with abysmal art by Jack Sparling. The cover boasted that Neutro didn't know the difference between right and wrong. Neither, it seemed, did the editor.
FP

New Gods

DC March 1971 to November 1972 (11); July 1977 to August 1978; 19 issues

Eons ago 1 world divided to become 2: New Genesis (the good) and Apokalips (the bad). This was the basis for Jack Kirby's superb Fourth World trilogy, which had Darkseid, ruler of Apokalips, searching for the omnipowerful anti-life equation on Earth and being opposed by the gods of New Genesis, such as Orion (actually Darkseid's son), Lightray, Metron and Highfather. Kirby was at the height of his career here. He superbly portrayed a real feeling of epic and power in the series. In my opinion, issue 7, which explained the origin of the saga, must be one of the best comics ever produced. Issues 4-9 also reprinted golden age Manhunter stories by Simon and Kirby. The comic was cancelled, but later revived after a New Gods appearance in First Issue Special 13. The new run was scripted by Gerry Conway and art was by Don Newton and they both did a good job, but despite introducing new New Gods, they weren't quite able to recapture the grandeur originated by Kirby. The feature continued in Adventure 459-460 after cancellation. A simply superb series that should be in everyone's collection.
Key Issues: 1-19. HY

New Teen Titans

DC From November 1980; 24 issues +

Taking Robin, Wonder Girl and Kid Flash from the old team, revamping Beast Boy and adding 3 new characters, editor Len Wein and writer Marv Wolfman came up with a team that, while derivative and an attempt to parallel Marvel's X-Men, is also very entertaining. Much of the credit for this must go to the co-plotting and dynamic pencils of George Perez. The first appearance of the team was as a free insert in DC Presents 26.
Key Issues: 1-15, 17-24. FP

Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD

MARVEL June 1968 to November 1969 (15); November 1970 to March 1971; 18 issues

The splitting of Strange Tales into 2 books, Dr Strange and Nick Fury, finally gave Jim Steranko the chance to really turn himself loose in the latter. Although his plots still left something to be desired, his marvellous use of pacing and suspense more than made things even. Additionally, unlike so many other creators, he really used the art to tell the story. He left with issue 5, however, and Gary Friedrich took over after a few fill-ins. He failed because he attempted to emulate Steranko without being capable of doing so; whereas Steranko merely went over the top, Friedrich pushed everything over the cliff's edge. 12-14 were his best efforts, but these could not stave off cancellation with 15. The unresolved plotlines were concluded in Avengers 72. The book was revived later as a 64-page reprint title, representing the Fury stories from Strange Tales 136-144.
Key Issues: 1-3, 5. APS

Nick Fury and His Agents of Shield

MARVEL February 1973 to October 1973; 5 issues

Bearing a name virtually identical to the bona-fide title (done, no doubt, to deliberately confuse everyone), this short-lived reprint series retold the Fury stories from Strange Tales 146-155.
APS

Night Force

DC From August 1982; 3 issues +

A non-specific horror series with a cast of expendable characters all revolving around 1 compelling axis, Baron Winters. This is what Marv Wolfman and Gene Colan have in mind for their first joint project since the revolutionary Tomb of Dracula strip. Thus far, Baron Winters and his allies have been consistently entertaining. A 16-page introductory strip appeared in New Teen Titans 21. Recommended reading.
Key Issues:** 1-3. **SW

Night Rider

MARVEL October 1974 to August 1975; 6 issues

This reprinted the original Ghost Rider series. As Marvel already had a successful character by that name in 1974 the word 'ghost' was altered to 'night' throughout. Due to the different layout techniques used in 67 and 74 some of Dick Ayers double-page spreads were printed back to back.
FP

Noman

TOWER November 1966 to March 1967; 2 issues

The second spin-off title from Thunder Agents, it featured solo stories of an android who could switch his mind from 1 artificial host body to another. Like all Tower titles the art is excellent, but the stories let the book down.
DWC

Not Brand Echh

MARVEL August 1967 to May 1969; 13 issues

The first 8 issues concentrated on lampooning Marvel's characters and from 9 the page count (and price) increased as it began to feature movie and TV parodies as well. The Forbush Man starred in 5 and 8 and was very funny, as was the origin of the Simple Surfer in 13, but the most inspired take-off was that of Superman in 7. Unfortunately, not everything was funny and the comic was probably cancelled in time.
Key Issues:** 3, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13. **FP

Nova

MARVEL September 1976 to May 1979; 25 issues

Teenager Richard Rider was given the powers of a Nova Prime from Xandar in order that he could avenge the destruction of a planet. With super strength, partial invulnerability and the ability to fly, he fought a number of new villains in a series that was a conscious attempt by Marv Wolfman to imitate the old Marvel heroes of the '60s. They always won, but things rarely turned out completely right. The first few issues were very nice, but the book lost its way with 13 (12 was a silly Spider-Man team up). By the time the book came back to form it was too late to avoid cancellation. Loose plot threads are tied up in Fantastic Four 208-214.
Key Issues:** 1-11, 19. **FP

Nukla

DELL December 1965 to September 1966; 4 issues

A US spy pilot is blown to smithereens by an enemy's nuclear defences, but manages to re-assemble himself by sheer force of will—thus is born Nukla, the atomic spy. The stories are predictably poor but there was some above average artwork by Dick Giordano, Steve Ditko and Sal Trapani.
SW

The Occult Files of Dr Spektor

GOLD KEY May 1973 to February 1977; 24 issues

Basically an anthology title, this is different in that Dr Spektor is brought into the '70s Gold Key universe, with issue 7 revealing a blood link between him, Dagar and Tragg. There were also guest appearances by Dr Solar in 14 and 23. The artwork is mainly by the Spanish studios Gold Key used at the time.
SW

Omac

DC October 1974 to December 1975; 8 issues

Jack Kirby's last and shortest series for DC concerned Buddy Blank, a menial in the latter part of the century, who was transformed by a sophisticated satellite into a human powerhouse—a One Man Army Corps, who maintained a psyhic link with the satellite. As always with later Kirby work, the concepts and plotting were incredible, but poor pacing and bad scripting resulted in a duff series.
FP

Omega

MARVEL: March 1976 to October 1977; 10 issues

A very strange series concerning a man in a blue costume and red cape with immense strength who landed on Earth and was somehow connected with a serious-minded young boy, whose parents were robots. After that synopsis, it will come as no surprise to learn that Steve Gerber, along with Mary Skrenes, created and scripted the series (apart from 7 and 8). It seems that they were also the only ones who knew what was going on, since the fill-ins were hack jobs and the conclusion to the series (by Steven Grant in Defenders 76 and 77) was messy and inconsistent. I like this, but it's not to everyone's taste.
FP

Our Army at War

DC August 1952 to February 1977; 301 issues

This was without any doubt the best war title ever produced. From 88 it featured Sgt Rock of Easy Co. This was always a good series, but from the early to mid-'70s it was excellent with stories by Robert Kanigher and art mainly by Russ Heath. The stories never glorified war, but rather showed the misery of it. There were many excellent character studies of G.I.s, civilians and also the enemy—who weren't always shown as cruel barbarians, but rather soldiers who were just doing their duty and obeying orders. Of course, like all fictional war stories, they can never be truly realistic, but they did occasionally come close, despite a new fantasy-oriented stories and the fact that there were no great casualties among the main characters. Issue 151 contained the first appearance of Enemy Ace. The comic eventually changed title to Sgt Rock. Good reading, even for ardent super-hero fans.
Key Issues: *238, 245-255, 257-260, 263, 265, 267, 272, 273, 279, 281, 300.* ***HY***

Our Fighting Forces

DC November 1954 to October 1978; 181 issues

This war comic included Gunner and Sarge, Devil Dog, Capt Hunter and Hunter's Hellcats, but is best remembered for the Losers (in 123-181)—"a special unit possessing unique battle skills, who never win without losing," starring Capt Storm, Gunner and Sarge and Johnny Cloud. Robert Kanigher, one of comics' best war writers, wrote their stories up to issues 150, with most issues superbly drawn by John Severin. This was quite a good series, but got a bit way-out when Jack Kirby took over in 151-162. Still, he kept it fairly interesting until Kanigher returned with 163. Not a bad war comic.
HY

Outlaw Kid

MARVEL August 1970 to October 1975; 30 issues

Issues 1-9 reprinted some classy Doug Wildey (1-9) and Al Williamson (3, 9) from the '50s. They proved so popular that Marvel started producing new stories. They weren't up to the standard of the old material and the title reverted to reprints with 17, although for once the continuing plotline was actually concluded first.
SWFP

The Owl

GOLD KEY April 1967 to April 1968; 2 issues

The success of the tongue-in-cheek Batman TV show spawned a multitude of comic book imitations, the worst of which must have been the revival of the '40s hero, the Owl. He already had a costume that approximated Batman's, and the comic is so bad that it makes compulsive reading.

FP

Peacemaker

CHARLTON March 1967 to November 1967; 5 issues

Christopher Smith is a US peace envoy and no man is more opposed to war and violence than he, but when diplomacy fails, he becomes Peacemaker, master of the weapons he pleads with the world to lay down. The idea is dated now, but still worth looking at. He proved so popular as the back-up in Fightin' 5 40 and 41 that he was given his own title. Unfortunately, Joe Gill's plots, believable for 9 pages, were overstretched as feature length. Try 1-3 though for Pat Boyette's best comics work.
SW

Peter Parker, The Spectacular Spider-Man

MARVEL From December 1976; 71 issues +; 2 Annuals 1979, 1980

Having already ruined the character by creating Marvel Team-Up, Marvel hammered the final nail in Spider-Man's coffin by initiating his third monthly book. Issue 1 is worth buying to laugh at Gerry Conway's text page in which he promises that all 3 books will mesh neatly so as to make it appear as though there is just 1 Spider-Man book published 3 times a month. But even when considered apart from Team-Up and Amazing, the stories have been spectacularly remarkable in the consistency of their mediocrity, accompanied by some decidedly pedestrian art. There is nothing at all deserving of high spot status here, but if my arm were twisted enough, I suppose that I could admit that 1-5 (Conway/Goodwin) and 25-31 (Mantlo) aren't bad. Roger Stern has struck up a faint spark of hope with current issues and the fact that Denny O'Neil is editing all 3 Spider-Man books can't worsen matters, but it'll take a lot of seeing before I can believe that events will improve.
APS

Phantom

CHARLTON (30) February 1969 to January 1977; 74 issues

When Charlton began publishing the Phantom they forgot all about issue 29, and started with 30. Their first strips were no better than those by Gold Key or King, with their stable of artists, Aparo, Boyette and Ditko producing some of their least distinguished work on tired Joe Gill scripts. Lee Falk disliked what Charlton was doing with his character so much that he insisted they farm the work out to Spanish artists. This produced little change. With issue 67 the book was resuscitated by Don Newton, who managed to breathe new life into the character by utilising the "Shadow" aspect of early Phantom and setting stories in unusual locations and times. Particularly recommended are 70, a delightful pastiche of gangster movies, co-starring Humphrey Bogart, and 74, which is one of the better bicentennial stories put out in 1976.
***Key Issues:** 70, 71, 74. SW/DWC*

Phantom

GOLD KEY/KING November 1962 to December 1967; 28 issues

Lee Falk's famous jungle detective has had a chequered four-colour career. Gold Key's handling of the character's first 17 issues was characteristically lacklustre, and even when King Features took charge in September 1966 things remained poor. All but a couple of issues were handled by erstwhile Phantom strip artist Bill Lignante. The back-ups in the King issues were far more interesting. Flash Gordon by Wally Wood and then Gil Kane in 18-20, Brick Bradford by Paul Norriss in 26, and a couple of civil war strips by a very young Jeff Jones.
SW

Phantom Stranger

DC June 1969 to March 1976; 41 issues

The series starring DC's most mysterious super-hero started off with new stories framing old '50s reprints. There was a drastic change with 4, which introduced a super-hero element and introduced the Stranger's arch-foe, Tala, a sorceress. The series reached its peak with a 3-part saga wherein the Stranger battled Tala. Also around this time there was a superb back-up strip, The Spawn of Frankenstein, by Marv Wolfman and Mike Kaluta. Len Wein and Jim Aparo left the Stranger's

strip with 27 and it rapidly became dull, improving only just before cancellation, with a 3-part Phantom Stranger /Deadman team-up in 39-41.
Key Issues: 4, 17, 18, 20-26. HY

The Phantom Zone

DC January 1982 to April 1982; 4 issues

An epic 4-part mini-series masterfully written by Steve Gerber and beautifully drawn by Gene Colan, it dealt with the many mysteries surrounding the Phantom Zone and its prisoners. While Superman is trapped in the zone the escaped Kryptonian villains (all superbly characterised) cause havoc on Earth. Needed to stop them are the JLA and Supergirl. Nuff said?
Key Issues: 1-4. HY

Phoenix

ATLAS January 1975 to October 1975; 4 issues

A true mess of a comic. An injured astronaut discovers a race of aliens who want to destroy the Earth, and fights them with the help of a very vaguely powered suit. The only issue of interest is 3, which has a tongue-in-cheek back-up strip starring the Dark Avenger with lovely art by Pat Broderick. With issue 4, the strip totally changed direction, becoming, if anything, worse than it was.
Key Issues: 3.

Planet of Vampires

ATLAS February 1975 to July 1975; 3 issues

Despite the off-putting title, this was one of Atlas' most worthwhile efforts. Some astronauts return to Earth after a long mission in space and have to come to terms with a planet populated by vampires and street savages. Despite having 3 writers and artists in 3 issues, consistency was maintained and it was a series with infinite promise.
Key Issues: 1-3. FP

Plastic Man

DC December 1966 to June 1968 (10); March 1976 to November 1977; 20 issues

The first series was not done the way that creator Jack Cole intended Plastic Man. The stories were too comical and the art too cartoony. The second series was, however, truer to the original Plastic Man with good, fun stories and impressive art. It's a shame that it never caught on.
HY

Plop

DC October 1973 to December 1976; 24 issues

This great humour title was strongly influenced by Mad's Sergio Aragones. It featured weird humour stories and cartoons, the earlier issues being the most amusing. The book was wittily hosted by Cain, Abel and Eve. Issues 1-19 featured superb covers by either Basil Wolverton or Wally Wood. *HY*

Police Action

ATLAS February 1975 to June 1975; 3 issues

Lomax, the lead hero here, was obviously based on the TV detective series of the time and, quite incredibly, manages to be worse than all of them. The back-up strip, Luke Malone—Manhunter, features art by Mike Ploog. Don't get too excited, though, because it looks as if he used his feet to draw this whilst using his hands for Man-Thing.
FP

Power Man (and Iron Fist)

MARVEL From June 1972; 86 issues +; 1 Annual 1976; 1 GS 1975

A petty criminal was framed by his partner and ended up in Seagate prison. In return for parole he volunteered for cell regeneration experiments. They were disrupted and he emerged from a chemical bath with bulletproof skin and substantially increased strength. Breaking out of the prison, he adopted the name Luke Cage and set himself up as a Hero for Hire, the title of the book for the first 16 issues. The origin by Archie Goodwin and George Tuska was very good, but subsequent tales were of indifferent quality, a problem that has plagued the book until recently. A succession of scripters tried the book, the most aesthetically successful being Don McGregor, who produced a fine 3-parter in 28, 30 and 31 and introduced Cage's greatest adversary, the coke machine. With the cancellation of Iron Fist's own title the two characters were teamed as from 48. The Chris Claremont/John Byrne team produced 3 good issues before another slide into mediocrity. The book was then saved by Mary Duffy who, with artist Kerry Gamill produced the most consistently good period that the title has seen. She defined an awkward relationship between the two lead characters, filled in many gaps in their pasts and produced solid, entertaining stories. Denys Cowan has now taken over as artist.
Key Issues: 1, 2, 28, 30, 31, 48-50, 58-67, 69, 71, 73-75, 78-80.

Prez

DC September 1973 to March 1974; 4 issues

A lot of people seem to put this comic by Joe Simon and Jerry Grandenetti down. It was, in fact, a very original idea that had an 18-year-old boy become president of the U.S.A. Interesting enemies included Boss Smiley (a man with an actual smiley badge head) and a crippled vampire.
HY

Ragman

DC September 1976 to July 1977; 5 issues

Drawn from the same mould as the Batman, (hero avenging death of parent, etc.) the character exploited this time-honoured cliche well, to become very good reading. Moody writing by Bob Kanigher and realistic art by Joe Kubert and the Redondo Studio gave this book an unusually evocative feel.
***Key Issues:** 1-5. DWC*

Raiders of the Lost Ark

MARVEL September 1981 to November 1981; 3 issues

Poor version of what is a comic book film. It's surprising that such an easily adaptable idea was so mishandled. It's fair reading only because the excellence of the film rises above the comic.
DWC

Rawhide Kid

MARVEL March 1955 to September 1957 (16); August 1960 to May 1979, 151 issues: 1 Annual 1971

One of the western strips on which Stan Lee developed the style that was later so successfully applied to the super-heroes. Rawhide Kid was another sure shot roaming the west, but he couldn't compete with the superheroes. The comic went reprint with 115 and was eventually cancelled.
FP

Red Sonja

MARVEL January 1977 to May 1979; 15 issues

This series continues directly from Marvel Feature (2) and Roy Thomas took over the writing. Although the first 6 issues were average, those following had hopelessly jumbled plots with no explanation of events, nor of the motives behind the characters' actions (including, in many cases, Sonja herself!). Additionally, the contrast between Frank Thorne's art in the first 11 issues and the competence of John Buscema in 12 is truly quite remarkable. The best feature of the series is Cat Yronwode's letter in issue 13.
APS

Red Wolf

MARVEL May 1972 to September 1973; 9 issues

This Red Indian creation of Roy Thomas first appeared in Avengers 80 and 81, but the Red Wolf that appeared here in the first 6 issues was an ancestor of the present day character. Although this was Marvel's best western series, it still pales besides most DC western series. The issues set in the old west are better than the last 3 set in the present.
FP

Reptilicus

CHARLTON August 1961 to October 1961; 2 issues

Yet another Charlton series about a dinosaur running amok in the 20th century. The first issue adapted a film in which Reptilicus is grown from a discarded limb found frozen in the arctic. The comic was retitled Reptisaurus with issue 3 and lasted another 6 tedious issues.
FP

Rima

DC May 1974 to May 1975; 7 issues

Adapted from the novel "Green Mansions," this South American jungle girl had a way above average strip. The 4-part adaptation of the book and the 3 subsequent issues were all scripted by Bob Kanigher and superbly illustrated by Nestor Redondo. Joe Kubert's editorial touch and covers should not go uncredited, nor should the lovely and imaginative back-up strips by Alex Nino (Space Voyagers) and Noly Zamora (Space Marshall). Recommended reading.
***Key Issues:** 1-7. SW*

Ringo Kid

MARVEL January 1970 to November 1976; 30 issues.

The misadventures of Marvel's half-Indian western hero. The promise of the halfbreed theme was never lived up to, and the '70s strips were overshadowed by the accompanying '50s reprints, which were pretty poor

themselves. It all adds up to a consistent disappointment.
SW

Rip Hunter

DC April 1961 to December 1965; 29 issues

The time-master and his associates travelled through time in their time-sphere, resembling the Challengers of the Unknown crossed with Dr Who. Well related, but uncredited stories, drawn for the main part by DC evergreen Bill Ely (he drew the Scoop Scanlon strip in Action Comics No. 1). Rip Hunter also appeared in Showcase 20-21 and 25-26.
SW

Ripley's Believe It or Not

GOLD KEY June 1965 to August 1965 (3); April 1967 to February 1980; 94 issues

Believe it or not, the first 2 issues were subtitled 'True Ghost Stories' and the third 'True War Stories.' The first half of this comic's run is quite readable, but unmspiring as anthology titles go. Some durable scripting (uncredited as usual) and art by the likes of Wood, Crandall, Evans, Williamson, Orlando and McWilliams help, though. Once into the '70s, this title becomes pure dreck, I'm afraid.
SW

Rom

MARVEL From December 1979, 35 issues +; 1 Annual 1982

Based on a Parker Brothers toy, Rom is an avenging alien fighting Dire Wraiths and encountering the usual distrust from humanity. Though Bill Mantlo's writing is not up to his early Micronauts standard, the book has a good '50s science fiction atmosphere to it and has begun to develop beyond its limited concept, becoming good, if undemanding, reading.
***Key Issues:** 12. DWC*

The Saga of the Swamp Thing

DC From May 1982; 6 issues +; 1 Annual 1982

The revival of the Swamp Thing was due to the Warner Brothers film (adapted in the annual), and it's been a pleasant surprise. Instead of the dreck one associates with movie spin offs, Marty Pasko and Tom Yeates have crafted their own version of the creature complete with a surprisingly diverse case of supporting characters.
SW

Sandman

DC Winter 1974 (1); May 1975 to January 1976; 6 issues

Deep in the dream dimension stands the Sandman's HQ, from which he and his creepy pals, Glob and Brute, launch themselves into the nightmares of kids. Originally (and very wisely) intended to be a one-shot special reuniting the famous Simon and Kirby team, this title became a bit of a nightmare itself. 2 and 5 have weak scripts by Mike Fleisher and all prove to be utterly puerile.
SW

Sarge Steel

CHARLTON December 1964 to April 1966; 8 issues

Sarge Steel was a private investigator who lost his left hand and had it replaced with a steel one up to the wrist. Set in the world of international espionage, the series mirrors the James Bond concept, featuring last minute, death-defying escapes right, left and centre. There's really nothing new or original here, but the comic is competently handled and makes for good reading nevertheless. The title changed to Secret Agent with issue 9, but only lasted 2 more issues.
APS

Savage Combat Tales

ATLAS February 1975 to July 1975; 3 issues

Another gory Atlas war mag, this time starring Sgt Stryker's Death Squad; a collection of convicts who fought in the North African desert during World War II. It's rough stuff and Archie Goodwin should be ashamed of himself for writing it.
FP

Scorpion

ATLAS February 1975 to July 1975; 3 issues

A series highly regarded by fandom due to Howie Chaykin's plot and art on the first 2 issues. The comic concerned a '30s mercenary adventurer who later moved to Marvel, calling himself Dominic Fortune. The third issue updated the series to the present and turned the Scorpion into a costumed crimefighter, destroying all quality in the process.
FP

Sea Devils

DC October 1961 to June 1967

The Sea Devils were a group of undersea divers and yet another successful Showcase graduate. The group consisted of a brainy leader, his blonde girlfiend, her kid brother and a loveable hunk of meat; there can be little doubt that they are the prototypes of the Fantastic Four. Apart from beautifully toned covers, there's little to recommend here. The stories are nostalgically nice, but nothing you're going to keep.
FP

Secret Origins

DC March 1973 to November 1974; 7 issues

This excellent series reprinted golden and silver age origins of DC's best known heroes. Recommended are 1 (Batman, Superman and the Earth 1 Flash), 6 (Blackhawks and the LSH) and especially issue 5 which has both parts of the golden age Spectre's origin.
***Key Issues:** 1, 5, 6. DWC*

Secret Six

DC May 1968 to May 1969; 7 issues

6 people with different backgrounds and abilities were brought together by a mysterious person named Mockingbird to destroy evil doers beyond the reach of the law. Mockingbird had helped each of the 6 in the past and their livelihoods still lay in his grasp. This was a fine espionage series written by E. Nelson Bridwell,

which had a nice twist—1 of the 6 was Mockingbird, but who?
HY

Secret Society of Super Villains

DC June 1976 to July 1978; 15 issues; 1 Special 1977

One of the most enjoyable series of recent years. Originally assembled to battle Darkseid, the Society was later led in turn by a Stan Lee clone named Funky Flashman, Gorilla Grodd and the Wizard, each with his own master plan. They were relentlessly opposed by Captain Comet. Although not a humour book, scripts were handled none too seriously by Gerry Conway and Bob Rozakis and, while lacking in depth and still providing the requisite amounts of action, this was a really fun comic. Plot threads are tied up in JLA 166-168.
***Key Issues:** 1-6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, Special 1977. FP*

Secrets of Sinister House

DC (5) July 1972 to July 1974; 18 issues

Formerly Sinister House of Secret Love. More DC mystery stories. What else needs to be said?
HY

Secrets of the Haunted House

DC May 1975 to January 1976 (5); July 1977 to November 1978 (14); August 1979 to March 1982; 46 issues; 1 Special 1978

Nothing here to give your spine a chill, although there were a few horror stories with nice art, Mike Golden's effort in 10 comes to mind. A fairly interesting mystery series featuring Mr E, who 's blind, appeared in 31-41.
HY

Secrets of the Legion of Super-Heroes

DC January 1981 to March 1981; 3 issues

The third DC mini-series dealt with the 30th century group of super-powered teenagers. A loose framing plot encompassed a retelling of the Legionnaires' origins. Although some origins were new to the reader the book didn't really live up to its title. WARNING: Every issue carries a Jack C. Harris text page.
FP

Sgt Fury and His Howling Commandos

MARVEL May 1963 to December 1981; 167 issues; 7 Annuals 1965 to 1971

Of all of Marvel's long-running titles, this one must surely have been the most static. Set in World War II, the plot for absolutely any issue picked at random will involve Nick Fury and his team of crack soldiers parachuting into some Nazi-occupied area with orders to rescue a captured Allied commander, destory a missile base or free a town from Nazi domination. As they are the antithesis of realistic war comics, reading more than 5 issues becomes incredibly tedious. The comic's redeeming features include the jocular dialogue initiated by Stan Lee and the well-established (if completely two-dimensional) personalities of Fury and his Howlers. Although Roy Thomas took over as writer in 29, and Gary Friedrich in 42, any changes in scripting style were barely noticeable at the best of times. A mention should also go to Dick Ayers who drew virtually every issue. From issue 80 every odd-numbered issue reprinted earlier stories and the book went completely reprint with 121. The last issue reprinted the first. Several issues are noteworthy. 13, guest starring Captain America, was the only super-hero influenced issue, and Nick Fury's girlfriend was killed in 18, the first such occurrence in comics. 22 was the best issue for the humourous dialogue aspect, 27 told the story of how Fury gained his eyepatch and 72 had a bit of thought behind the plot.
APS

Sgt Rock

DC (302) From April 1977; 369 issues +; 1 Annual 1982; 1 Special 1977; 1 Spectacular 1978

This comic continued from Our Army at War, featuring the top war hero in comics in more or less the same standard of stories. It's always well written by Robert Kanigher, with a good sampler being the 1982 annual involving Rock's brother. Most issues contain short back-up strips offering a variety of war themes, many involving science-fiction. They are also used as a training ground for new artists.
HY

Shade the Changing Man

DC July 1977 to September 1978; 8 issues

A transdimensional espionage agent, Rac Shade, is outlawed in his own dimension, Meta. His unique M-vest makes fear-distorted images of himself real. Shade sets out to prove his innocence on Meta. Steve Ditko drew and plotted the book, which was cancelled in mid-flight during DC's cutbacks in 1978. The art is some of Ditko's best, and Mike Fleisher's scripts weave neatly around the vastly complex plotlines. Compulsive stuff.
***Key Issues:** 1-8. SW*

The Shadow

ARCHIE August 1964 to September 1965; 8 issues

Imagine the Shadow: the 1930s, foggy nights, the blazing .45s—one of the great pulp heroes. Well, the Archie Shadow runs around in blue and green underwear chasing panel borders and punching word balloons. Stories recycled the same plot, dialogue was abysmal and the art wasn't too good either. One of the worst comics ever published; treat it like the bubonic plague.
DWC

The Shadow

DC November 1973 to September 1975; 12 issues

A series set in the 1930s about the mysterious all-powerful avenger and his underground organisation. Denny O'Neil superbly adapted the old pulp hero to comic form and there was fantastic period art by Mike Kaluta in 1-4 and 6. Other artists included Frank Robbins and E.R. Cruz who both suited the series as well. The Kaluta illustrated issues are all classics, but 6, "Night of the Ninja" particularly stands out.
***Key Issues:** 1-12. HY*

Shanna the She-Devil

MARVEL December 1972 to August 1973; 5 issues

Despite being another of Marvel's ill-fated attempts at producing "Women's Lib" comics written by women, this series is better than its counterparts (though this isn't saying much). Shanna O'Hara was a normal American woman who became so disillusioned with man's cruelty to both man and beast alike that she divorced herself from civilisation (with the exception of lipstick) and decided to become a female Tarzan imitation in the African jungle. After a distinctly stereotyped first 3 issues by Carole Seuling, Steve Gerber came to the rescue in issue 4 by launching the Mandrill/Nekra storyline which blossomed into its full glory in Daredevil 108-112.
APS

Shazam

DC February 1973 to June 1978; 35 issues

This was a nice try at reviving the original Captain Marvel and Family. Although they weren't as good as the golden age stories, the earlier issues of this new series did come close, due to the influence of C.C. Beck's art. A lot of stories were well produced, but were probably too light-hearted and simple for today's audience. This explains the change of direction that came about with issue 34, when Captain Marvel took on a more realistic look. This change was too late to save the book, but the feature continued in World's Finest while that title was in the dollar comic format. It now appears in the Adventure Comics digest.
HY

She-Hulk

MARVEL From February 1980; 14 issues +

A painful case of Marvel's vogue for incest, the She-Hulk was actually Jennifter Walters, a cousin of Bruce Banner who, through a string of coincidences, was given a blood transfusion from the Hulk's alter ego, with obvious results. Whereas Spider-Woman has managed to rise above its derivative origin, She-Hulk remained as embarrassing as its concept is. David Kraft's writing treated the character with the disdain it deserved.
DWC

Sherlock Holmes

DC October 1975; 1 issue

Denny O'Neil wrote this adaptation of fiction's best known detective and managed a fair job, as did E.R. Cruz on the art. The book was only published to retain DC's copyright on the title, which results in a somewhat bland product.
DWC

Shogun Warriors

MARVEL February 1979 to September 1980; 20 issues

A long-hidden group of scientists recruited 3 humans to combat a long-hidden group of black magicians, using giant robots. Stories are by Doug Moench and Herb Trimpe and rarely aspire to weak. Plotlines are concluded in FF 226.
FP

Showcase

DC April 1956 to September 1970 (93); September 1977 to September 1978; 104 issues

As is obvious from the title, the intention of this comic was to showcase a variety of different features, many of which later gained their own series, although Flash, Green Lantern and Sgt Rock are the only showcase graduates still appearing in their own titles. The following are the most important or interesting issues. Green Lantern appeared in 22-24, and the first appearance of the new Atom was in 34-36. The Metal Men were created over a weekend to run in 37-40, Dr Fate and Hourman were teamed in 55, 56 and the Spectre starred in 60, 61 and 64. The Inferior Five, that great humour strip, started in 62, 63 and 65. Steve Ditko's Creeper (73), Anthro (74), the Hawk and the Dove (75) and Batlash (76) all moved straight into their own titles, but the equally good Dolphin (79), an underwater heroine by J. Scott Pike, was never seen again. The first sword and sorcery series, Nightmaster was in 82-84 and the new, revived, but disappointing Doom Patrol occupied 94-96. Earth 2's Supergirl, Power Girl of the JSA soloed in 97-99 and 100 is worth mentioning as a confusing story that attempted to team all the characters that had appeared in Showcase. Hawkman starred in 101-103, and the series folded with O.S.S., spies at war.
***Key Issues:** 34, 37-40, 55, 56, 62, 63, 65, 73-76, 79, 82-84, 101-103. HY*

Silver Surfer (1)

MARVEL August 1968 to September 1970; 18 issues

A being unique in the universe, trapped on earth by his former master and creator, Galactus. Armed with the power cosmic and a surfboard that sails the currents of air and space, our chromed hero battles for acceptance on a world he never made. Stan Lee's most controversial character took on a new look as a result of being awarded his own book (after having been featured in occasional Fantastic Four stories for 2 years). Within 4 issues he had become a leaner, less muscular character who rarely used his cosmic powers, but tended to

moralise about violence and alienation a lot, finally coming to some angry conclusions. Some of Lee's best scripts are accompanied by some fine pencils from John Buscema in all but the Surfer's final issue, drawn by his creator, Jack Kirby. Along with Spider-Man, the Silver Surfer revolutionised all the subsequent ideas as to what super-hero strips were all about.
***Key Issues:** 4, 8, 9, 18. SW*

Silver Surfer (2)

MARVEL June 1982; 1 issue

Imagine that you'd never seen a Silver Surfer comic and that you'd only heard rumours about who and what he was. Then you'd really enjoy this Stan Lee/John Byrne extravaganza. Otherwise you'll think that 48 pages were really wasted on this 8-page plot. A silver-plated box of smoke that does little more than shadow the original series.
SW

The Sinister House of Secret Love

DC November 1971 to May 1972; 4 issues

Nicely done Gothic romance tales by such peole as Len Wein, Michael Fleisher, Tony DeZuniga and Alex Toth. The title switched to Secrets of Sinister House with issue 5.
HY

Six Million Dollar Man

CHARLTON June 1976 to January 1977 (4); October 1977 (5); February 1978 to June 1978; 9 issues

Based on the TV series of the same name featuring Steve Austin, the Bionic Man, the first 2 issues by Joe Gill and Joe Staton set the standard. They were awful, and from there things went downhill, resulting in some of the worst comics of the '70s.
SW

Skull

MARVEL August 1975 to November 1976; 8 issues

Vietnam veteran Jim Scully and the passengers of a small charter plane are sucked back in time in the Bermuda Triangle. With many dinosaurs about, survival was the name of the game; something the castaways learn the hard way from Scully. This was a nice comic marred by a messy change of scripters (from Wolfman to Englehart to Mantlo). The continuity in 3, 4 and 5 was so compromised that sales plummeted. Mantlo's writing and some consistent artwork in 5-8 make for some good reading and 1 and 2 by Wolfman and Gan are great. Cancelled in mid-flight, this strip deserved a far better conclusion than Marvel Two-in-One 35-36.
***Key Issues:** 1, 2, 6-8. SW*

Son of Satan

MARVEL December 1975 to February 1977; 8 issues

Literally the son of Satan, Daimon Hellstrom's strip was a curious fusion of super-hero and horror elements that never quite meshed. Highly rated by those who like it, but vacuous and insubstantial to my mind. The character also appeared in Marvel Spotlight 12-24 and currently stars with the Defenders.
FP

Son of Vulcan

CHARLTON (46) May 1965 to January 1966; 50 issues

The first 45 issues were titled Mysteries of Unexplored Worlds, and the title became Thunderbolt with issue 51. Lame reporter Johnny Mann is adopted by the god Vulcan, and given godlike powers to battle evil (sound familiar, Thor fans?). This awful series has the unlikely privilege of containing Roy Thomas' first comic script (in 50, the rest are by Joe Gill). The art by Bill Fracchio and Tony Tallarico is abhorrent, even if Dave Cockrum did redesign Johnny's costume—in 1965 yet.
SW

Sorcery

RED CIRCLE September 1972 to October 1972 (2); October 1973 to February 1975; 11 issues

This was a horror anthology comic which contained a minimum of 1 good story per issue. Sorcery is notable for the selection of artists who produced stories. Gray Morrow can be found in every issue from 3 on, and Toth, McWilliams, Alcazar, Chaykin, Thorne and Wood also appear here.
***Key Issues:** 3, 6, 8. FP*

Space Adventures (1)

CHARLTON July 1952 to November 1964 (59); October 1967; 60 issues

Hailing from the early '50s, Charlton's premiere science fiction anthology title featured the first adventures of Steve Ditko's Captain Atom in 33-42. These stories ran 5-7 pages and all but the first were scripted by Joe Gill (Pat Maulli scripted the Captain's origin). The forgettable Mercury Man, a benign alien made of mercury, appeared in 44-45. The title was revived for 1 issue in 67 with 'UFO' as the cover logo, and features an excellent strip.
***Key Issues:** 60. SW*

Space Adventures (2)

CHARLTON May 1968 to July 1969 (8); May 1978 to March 1979; 13 issues

This science fiction anthology was revived to feature the work of the Charlton stable of the late '60s. Ditko, Boyette, Aparo etc. They easily surpass the quality of any previous issues. Issue 1 features UFO, starring Paul Mann and the saucers from the future, a little-known masterpiece. The late '70s revival reprints most of the Captain Atom stories from the comic's previous run.
***Key Issues:** 1. SW*

Space Family Robinson

GOLD KEY December 1962 to October 1969; 36 issues

The comic based on the film "Lost in Space" was retitled after its source with 37. This features the interplanetary escapades of the Robinson family—June, Craig (mom and dad), Tim, Tam and pets—in their space station home. Some imaginative plotting and reliable, if unexciting, artwork from Dan Spiegle make most issues readable, but much of a muchness.
SW

Space Man

DELL March 1962 to May 1964 (8); July 1972 to October 1972; 10 issues

The first issue of this dated space exploration series bears the cover blurb "Man has broken the ties of Earth and is about to conquer space." In these days of Star Wars and Space 1999 'about' just ain't good enough. 9 and 10 were reprints of 1 and 2, and appeared under the Gold Key masthead.
SW

Space 1999

CHARLTON November 1975 to November 1976; 7 issues

This book tended to follow the TV series, with a new planet and a company in danger every issue and was therefore somewhat predictable. Characterisation was sketchy, but most of the stories managed to catch the spirit of the TV show, particularly the John Byrne issues.
Key Issues: *3-6. DWC*

Special Marvel Edition

MARVEL January 1971 to February 1974; 16 issues

The first 4 issues were reprints of Lee/Kirby Thor tales and were giant sized. The comic reverted to normal size with 5 and a series of Sgt Fury reprints appeared in alternate months to those in his own title until 14. Issues 15 and 16 contained the first 2 Shang-Chi stories and the title changed to Master of Kung-Fu with 17.
FP

Spectre

DC November 1967 to May 1969; 10 issues

Supernatural criminals are battled by detective Jim Corrigan and his ghostly alter ego, the Spectre. Following 3 much heralded appearances in Showcase (60, 61, 64), the astral avenger was awarded his own comic. The first issue is by his Showcase team of Gardner Fox and Murphy Anderson; Anderson, however, left the strip to a fledgling Neal Adams to draw. After a 4-issue battle to find a scripter, Adams left the strip in the hands of god knows who. The last 5 issues have little to offer. Berni Wrightson drew a short feature in 10. The Spectre was later revived in Adventure Comics 431-440, written by Mike Fleisher.
Key Issues: *3-5. SW*

Spider-Man

MARVEL From March 1963; 233 issues +; 16 Annuals 1964 to 1971, 1973, 1976 to 1982; 6 GS July 1974 to September 1975

Spider-Man was Stan Lee's now classic attempt to create a super-hero in a completely opposite vein to the Superman type. Weak by super-hero standards and fallible in almost every department, Spider-Man is the easiest hero for the reader to identify with. Lee quickly discovered that Spider-Man was at his best in down-to-earth situations and so set about writing him accordingly. Many of his battles were against non-super-powered villains (eg the New York underworld) or villains with fairly minor powers. His wise-cracking fight dialogue was also superbly developed and still stands way above all today's hackneyed imitations. Steve Ditko was an essential part of the formation of Spider-Man's early character; basically his art made him look spidery and his exquisite use of shadow suited the book perfectly. When Ditko left in 38 it seemed as though he took part of Lee with him. Although the standard scripting remained above average for a while, it was always on the downward trend and gaps between the excellent issues became longer and longer. The book desperately needed a major change, but didn't get it until 1972. First, Lee relinquished the scripting reins to Gerry Conway and then, 1 year later, girlfriend Gwen Stacy and arch-villain Green Goblin were killed in 121 and 122. These events precipitated the most consistently excellent period of Spidey's career, topped by the superlative Jackal war running intermittently through to 150. Thereafter, the strip deteriorated to a completely standardised formula under Wein, Wolfman and O'Neil. However, Roger Stern commenced as regular scripter in 224 and has managed to manufacture some much better tales.
Key Issues: *15, 17-21, 26, 27, 30-33, 38-40, 47, 50, 63-65, 82, 121-125, 127-150, 153, 174, 175, 194, 195, 201, 202, Annual 15, GS 4. APS*

Spider-Woman

MARVEL From April 1978; 46 issues+

Marv Wolfman handled the writing for the first 8 issues and produced a very uneven run of stories, due mainly to his attempts to make the character different from Spider-Man. With issue 9, Mark Gruenwald started writing the book and turned in some unusual (18—"Sins of the Flesh") and macabre (9—Eye of the Needle," a mini-classic) stories whilst getting away from the heroine in bondage look of early issues. With 20, both Gruenwald and artist Carmine Infantino left the book and Michael Fleisher took over to produce a disappointing dozen issues which were not helped by a rotating series of artists and a heavy lack of direction. With 34, Chris Claremont and Steve Leialoha became the permanent creative team on the book and the title has begun to improve rapidly, with many of the Claremont hallmarks such as subplots, good characterisation and a regular supporting cast being applied to the book. The X-Men guest-starred in a nice 2-parter in 37-38, and the Silver Samurai and the Viper turned up in yet another Claremont book with a startling revala-

tion at the end of the story in 42-44. 45 guest stars the Impossible Man in a none-too-serious story.
Key Issues: *9, 18, 34, 35, 42-45.* ***DWCFP***

The Spirit

HARVEY October 1966 to March 1967; 2 issues

Will Eisner's newspaper character is arguably the best comic material ever written and these 2 issues were published in an excellent, giant-size, no ads format. They both reprinted 6 stories together with 1 new story. Issue 1 had a James Bond spoof and issue 2 told the life story of the Octopus.
Key Issues: *1,2.*

Spyman

HARVEY September 1966 to February 1967; 3 issues

Created by Jim Steranko, Spyman possessed a robot hand on which each finger performed a different function, magnet, camera, blaster, etc. Steranko was obviously saving his best for later.
FP

Stalker

DC July 1975 to January 1976; 4 issues

A rather pleasant little series concerning a man who made a bargain with a demon: his soul in exchange for combat skills, a bargain that left him totally devoid of emotion. Paul Levitz scripted and the art by Steve Ditko and Wally Wood suited the eldritch feel of the series. It's also complete in itself as a 4-parter.
FP

Starfire

DC September 1976 to November 1977; 8 issues

A sword and sorcery series about a slave who attempted to free her world from alien invaders. It could have been nice, but lacked direction and, not wanting to be sexist, Starfire didn't seem to have enough strength to file her nails, let alone fight with a sword.
HY

Star Hunters

DC November 1977 to November 1978; 7 issues

After an introductory appearance in DC Super Stars 16, this bunch of space travellers were launched into their own series. A corrupt government infected the crew with a disease which prevented them remaining on earth. The price of a cure was that the team obtain an artifact which related the origin of mankind. A great comic by David Michelinie, flawed only by the fact that the book was cancelled in the DC implosion before the last chapter appeared.
Key Issues: *1-7.* ***FP***

Starlord

MARVEL February 1982; 1 issue

This one-off title reprinted the Claremont/Byrne story from Marvel Preview 11 in colour, with a 6-page framing sequence drawn by Mike Golden. The story was the best featuring Starlord to date, and there's a Dr Who story in the back.
Key Issues: *1.* ***FP***

Starslayer

PACIFIC From February 1982; 4 issues +

Pacific's much vaunted royalties and retention of copyright system enabled Mike Grell to recreate Warlord thousands of years in the future. So far it's been unimpressive, spreading a page of plot over 3 pages. Better by far is the Rocketeer, by Dave Stevens which was the back-up strip in issues 2 and 3. The strip concerns a 1930s arielist who comes across an early jet pack for human use.
Key Issues: *2, 3.* ***FP***

Star Spangled War Stories

DC October 1941 to March 1977; 204 issues

This was always an interesting war title. Its series have included Mlle Marie, France's underground war heroine, in 87-89 and The War That Time Forgot in 90-137. This was an unusual feature pitting soldiers against dinosaurs, but it worked well. Enemy Ace, Germany's World War I flying ace appeared in 138-150, 181-183 and 200, but the comic is best remembered for the Unknown Soldier, an American whose face was hideously scarred and who assumed various secret identities to become a secret agent. Always a good series, the best story is David Michelinie's debut in 183, "8000 to One." The title changed to Unknown Soldier with 205.
Key Issues: *165, 169, 177, 178, 180, 183-194.*

Star Trek

GOLD KEY October 1967 (1); June 1968 (2); December 1968 (3); June 1969 to April 1979; 61 issues

Well, here we see Kirk and company boldly exploring new planets and such in exactly the same manner as portrayed in the TV series. This adaptation was doomed from the start. The characters are so well established and defined in the TV series that there's no opportunity for the author to do anything interesting or innovative with them in this book. Moreover, the situations the crew finds themselves in are far less imaginative. Overall, the run yields a very monotonous, wearisome read.
APS

Star Trek

MARVEL April 1980 to February 1982; 18 issues

The series began with Marv Wolfman's 3-part adaptation of the film; since then Marty Pasko has managed to catch the style of Star Trek very well. Characterisation has been good, but early issues suffered from some of

Dave Cockrum's most uninspired art. As a whole, the title has a certain predictability due to its going where the TV series has been before. Most of the later issues, particularly those with Walt Simonson art, are good reading.
DWC

Star Wars

MARVEL From July 1977; 64 issues +; 2 Annual 1979, 1982

The first 6 issues by Roy Thomas and Howie Chaykin were a faithful adaptation of the George Lucas film, and, hungry as the public was for Star Wars material, sales were unprecedented. Archie Goodwin wrote the following issues and, although restricted by the fact that a second Star Wars film was due, his scripting was inventive and just the right side of parody, featuring, among other things, a droid world and a 6-foot talking rabbit. Carmine Infantino drew most issues until 38, but the best issue during this run was 23, drawn by Walt Simonson and involving a bounty hunter with a pathological hatred of robots. 38 by Chris Claremont and Mike Golden was another excellent issue. Goodwin, Al Williamson and Carlos Garzon produced a splendid adaptation of The Empire Strikes Back in 39-44, following which a revamped strip emerged. The new team of David Michelinie and Walt Simonson have brought a much needed consistency to the series, interrupted only by a reworked John Carter story in 53 and 54. The relocation of the rebel forces to the planet Arbra and the current storyline in which Luke Skywalker becomes a pariah after apparently killing one of his own comrades are particularly well handled.
Key Issues: *23, 30, 38, 40, 58, 60-63.* ***FPSW***

Steel

DC March 1978 to November 1978; 5 issues

Gerry Conway's attempt to emulate the then current fads of bionics and World War II was one of the more deserving victims of the DC implosion. Cliched plots and Don Heck art added up to an extremely vapid product which is best forgotten.
DWC

Strange Adventures

DC September 1950 to November 1973; 244 issues

A varied adventure comic, it offered both science fiction and mystery stories. One of the best series here was the Atomic Knights, set in the future after a nuclear war, by John Broome and Murphy Anderson in 117-160. Other series have included Space Museum, the Enchantress, Animal Man, Immortal Man and Star Hawkins, a very nice, light-hearted series about a private eye and his robot secretary. The most famous series to appear here was Deadman. It concerned a murdered circus performer whose ghost was able to possess living bodies in order to hunt for his murderer. The first appearance (205) was drawn by Carmine Infantino, with Neal Adams continuing until the book went reprint with 217. The reprints all featured Adam Strange (with a new story in 222) and the Atomic Knights appeared in 217-231.
Key Issues: *182, 183, 205-216.* ***HY***

Strange Sports Stories

DC October 1973 to August 1974, 6 issues

This was Julie Schwartz's pet project about sports stories with a science fiction base. This knockout comic sailed along quite well and didn't need a kick-start. It had a lot of balls going for it with stories and art down to a tee. A nice comic to net, it didn't dive in quality. Worth racing or wrestling for.
HY

Strange Tales

MARVEL June 1951 to May 1968 (168), September 1973 to November 1976; 188 issues; 2 Annuals 1962, 1963

Strange Tales was the oldest Marvel comic to survive the super-hero era; the first 100 issues all featured weird/horror stories.

Human Torch

101-134, Annual 2 Of all the corny and hackneyed strips in the early '60s, this one must surely take the cake. One gets the impression that Lee and Leiber deliberately wrote it in a juvenile strain in order to attract younger readers. The series is marvellous from a nostalgic point of view due to the amount of well-established Marvel villains who made their first appearances here. The Thing co-starred from 124 onwards. These issues are, in general, the worst as the stories degenerated into non-stop, wise-cracking sequences.

Dr Strange

110, 111, 114-168 Dr Strange began as a weird/fantasy back-up feature and won his own series a few issues later because of his popularity. His best adventure by far was the extensive battle against Dormammu. This ran virtually uninterrupted from 126-146, although the latter few issues are essentially epilogues and are a bit drawn out. Lee's scripts were enhanced by Ditko's pencils; his depiction of alien dimensions and rendition of the various spells was a major factor in the strip's success. Thereafter, the stories deteriorated; despite the continued plotlines, they seem contrived and over-complicated when compared with the Dormammu sequence, especially as writers and artists were chopped and changed.

Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD

135-168 This series started off in the pits but constantly improved very slightly throughout its course. Marvel's well established World War II hero was transformed into a James Bond character in an up-to-date setting. The plots relied on an abundance of "scientific" gadgets popping up wherever convenient providing an amusing contrast to Fury's blunt, coarse and raucous personality. The quality stepped up a gain with 150 as Steranko took over from Lee, but his plots were muddled, despite the refreshingly different art. After 168 the title diverged into 2 books: Nick Fury and Dr Strange, with the numbering continuing in the latter. In 1973, however,

Strange Tales was reinstated with the numbering commencing from 169. 169-173 introduced Brother Voodoo, aka Jericho Drumm, who mastered the voodoo arts to gain revenge on a Houngan who had killed his brother. Thinly disguised by the voodoo decorations, the plots are poor and the character's powers boil down to create fire, fire resistance, teleportation and the ability to control others mentally. Definitely not one of Wein's best efforts, this strip continues in Tales of the Zombie 6. 174, 176 and 177 contained a storyline about a legendary humanoid statue called the Golem who came to life to serve the forces of good. The fact that it was cancelled after 3 issues says everything that needs to be said 178-181 featured Jim Starlin's version of Adam Warlock. Starlin immediately plunged him into a cosmic epic of the type he was so suited to; pitting him against the Magus, an alter ego of Warlock 5000 years in the future. Amongst the many factors which made this strip shine were the subtleties and hidden meanings within the script—spot them if you can. The story continues in Warlock 9. Dr Strange reprints from issues 130-141 served as Strange Tales' swansong.
Key Issues: *126, 127, 130-141, 146, 178-181.* ***APS***

Sub-Mariner

MARVEL May 1968 to September 1974; 72 issues; 2 Annuals 1971, 1972

The first 36 issues or so, all written by Roy Thomas, suffered from a severe lack of continuity with the exception of the Serpent Crown stories (1, 6-13). Otherwise, plots consisted of villains (eg Krang and Orka) cheering on their super-powered lackeys against Namor or of several ecology-based episodes. Eventually, in 37, Lady Dorma, Sub-Mariner's fiancee, was killed and Namor renounced his throne, thus forcing writers to think up new plots. Gerry Conway took over the scripting chores with 40 and, after a few forgettable issues, produced 2 very good 3-parters in which Namor found and lost his father and then aided Dr Doom against Modok. With 50, Bill Everett, Sub-Mariner's creator, assumed scripting and pencilling and turned out typical '50s plots. Steve Gerber took over with 58 and added continuity, new supporting characters and explored the excesses of violence perpetrated by Atlanteans towards outsiders. His excellence, however, slowly declined with Namor's greater involvment with the surface world. Overall, the series had excellent potential which was only realised for a few brief sequences.
Key Issues: *9-13, 44-49, 58-62.* ***JFG***

Sugar and Spike

DC May 1956 to November 1971; 98 issues

This comic by Sheldon Mayer was obviously aimed at younger readers, but I'm sure the older ones appreciated it more. Sugar and Spike were 2 babies who conversed in baby talk and got involved in various comic adventures. Don't be afraid to give this comic a go. The stories aren't that childish and they're all good fun.
HY

Superboy (1)

DC April 1949 to July 1973; 196 issues; 1 Annual 1964

This was an entertaining comic during the 1960s, showing that even back in his Smallville days Superman had trouble with kryptonite, Lex Luthor, and Phantom Zone villains. The basic situations in the stories didn't differ all that much from the Superman strip, so for Lois Lane read Lana Lang, etc, although Ma and Pa Kent were around. Unfortunately, the adolescent side of the strip was never really explored. By the early '70s, the stories had become a little more serious, and the Legion of Super-Heroes had become a semi-regular back-up strip prior to occupation of the title.
Key Issues: *136, 167-173, 175-184, 186-196.* ***HY***

Superboy (2)

DC From January 1980; 34 issues +; 1 Annual 1980

With the Legion of Super-Heroes finally ousting Superboy from his original title (he'd had no solo tales there in 7 years), he was moved into a new title after a few appearances in Adventure had proved successful. Cary Bate's scripting harkens back to the simple old DC style of comics. All quite good, if somewhat trivial. Dial H for Hero has been appearing in the back of the comic since issue 28. ***FP***

Superboy and the Legion of Super-Heroes

DC (197) September 1973 to December 1979; 258 issues

The stories after the LSH had taken over the old Superboy title were by the same team of Cary Bates and Dave Cockrum that had been producing the back-up series. 197-203 are all worthwhile and 204 saw Mike Grell become regular artist. The strip improved further when the Legion's old scripter from Adventure, Jim Shooter, returned to alternate with Bates. With 225 Paul Levitz became scripter and the excellent James Sherman became artist, making the series even more popular. Levitz's creative peak was the "Earthwar Saga" that appeared in 241-245, drawn by Sherman and later Joe Staton. Jim Starlin also produced 3 good stories in 239, 250 and 251, but the quality sunk when Gerry Conway took over as writer, declining into mediocrity. Apparently this didn't affect the sales though, and the title changed to the Legion of Super-Heroes with 259, with Superboy leaving both the Legion and his old title.
Key Issues: *197-205, 209-213, 219-221, 223-247, 250, 251.* ***HY***

Super Cops

RED CIRCLE July 1974; 1 issue

Before Starsky and Hutch, there was this police adventure comic with several short strips starring New York police officers Dave Greenberg and Bob Hantz. Marv Channing wrote the strips and there was art by Gray Morrow, Frank Thorne, Carlos Pino and V. Hack (?).
SW

Super Friends

DC November 1976 to August 1981; 47 issues

This series based on the TV cartoon adventures was definitely not DC's version of Spidey Super Stories. Although primarily aimed at a younger audience with simple stories (written by E. Nelson Bridwell), it was in fact an older fan's delight. The continuity with the DC universe was marvellous, featuring such characters as the Black Orchid, Nubia and T.N.T. and Dyna-mite—remember them from the 1940s? Bridwell also created the Global Guardians, an interesting range of international super-heroes who also starred in solo back-up strips. Well worth sampling. *HY*

Supergirl

DC November 1972 to January 1974 (9); October 1974; 10 issues

After successful series in Action and Adventure, Supergirl was finally given her own title, which were very romance-oriented, were stupid and the art was distinctly unimpressive. The Zatanna back-ups don't even deserve a mention. *HY*

Super Green Beret

LIGHTNING April 1967 to June 1967; 2 issues

When young Ted Holton put on his magical green beret he became a super-powered soldier. Poor stories, jingoism and an abundance of racial caricatures can be found in the only comic that dealt exclusively with the Vietnam War. *FP*

The Super Heroes

DELL January 1967 to June 1967; 4 issues

In the days before Marvel and DC had copyrighted the term 'super-hero,' 4 kids visited a museum staging an exhibition of super-hero statues. Coincidentally a set of 4 super-powered androids are also on show and an atomic mishap transfers the minds of the children into the bodies of the fab 4, laser powered El, Hypersonic Hy, Freezer powered Crispy and mini-skirted Polymer Polly. With villains like Mr Mod and the Coal Man (sentient coal!) plus some execrable art from Sal Trapani, you just know this is one to be avoided. *SW*

Superman

DC From Summer 1939; 376 issues +; 8 Annuals 1960-1964, 1 Spectacular 1977

The hero that started it all in the 1930s was in good form in the 1960s. Kryptonite, Phantom Zone villains and secret identity problems were used in abundance, and all to good effect. Also memorable were the imaginary stories such as the classic 'Death of Superman' in 149. Not every story was senses shattering, but they were all entertaining. The '70s saw a drastic change when Julie Schwarz became editor and made the stories more serious. This new look began in 233, when all kryptonite on earth was destroyed and Clark Kent became a TV newscaster, courtesy of Kenny O'Neil and Curt Swan. The character of Clark Kent was also explored in a new feature entitled "The Private Life of Clark Kent." The comic continued to offer good stories, with the next memorable event occuring in 296-299, which took a long look at the Clark Kent/Lois Lane/Superman triangle. There was a nice period between 310 and 335, written by Marty Pasko, who further developed the Superman/Lois Lane relationship and brought back Lana Lang, with very interesting results, Other notable events included the enlargement of the bottle city of Kandor in 338 and a well-produced Superman spectacular in 1977. More recently, Cary Bates has become the regular writer, and occasionally turns out a very special story. 262-263's "The Last Days of Lois and Lana" springs to mind, as does his ingenious epic in 365-368 involving the Superman Revenge Squad. Overall, this comic has given, and continues to give the best kind of comic entertainment around.

Key Issues: *134, 149, 159, 161, 163, 164, 167, 168, 170, 184, 188, 189, 194, 199, 200, 205, 215, 224, 228-231, 233-238, 240-243, 247, 249, 250, 254, 286, 296-300, 306, 310-324, 327-335, 338, 349, 362, 363, 365-368, Spectacular 1977. HY*

Superman Family

DC (164) May 1974 to September 1982; 222 issues

This giant-sized comic carried on the numbering from Jimmy Olsen and from 164-181 it was mostly reprint with a new lead feature which alternated between Jimmy Olsen, Lois Lane and Supergirl. It went to all new material on becoming a dollar comic with 182, featuring the 3 series above and a few new series, such as the witty Krypto (182-192), Nightwing and Flamebird (182-194) set in the bottle city of Kandor, and the most impressive Mr and Mrs Superman, which has appeared from 195. It starred the Earth 2 Superman, who has married Lois Lane (see Action 484), and was set in the '50s. The 3 main features were disappointing on the whole, the exceptions being a Supergirl/New Doom Patrol team up in 191-193. There was a lot of opportunity to enhance the Superman legend in this comic, but it never happened. The cancellation of the comic was really no great loss. *HY*

Supernatural Thrillers

MARVEL December 1972 to November 1973 (6); July 1974 to October 1975; 15 issues

The first run of this title adapted various supernatural stories, all of which are worth looking at. Of note are "It" (issue 1) by Roy Thomas and "Valley of the Worm" (3) by Thomas and Gerry Conway. The Living Mummy first appeared in 5 and assumed complete control over the feature on its reinstatement with 7. N'Kantu, king of an African tribe, was captured by conquering Egyptian factions and embalmed alive, only to emerge as the Living Mummy with a steel hard exterior aiding the Mummy against 4 invading, alien Elementals and fails to rise to really high quality because of the incompatibility of the supernatural and human components. Although scripted by a bewildering juggle of people (Gerber, Isabella, Wein and Warner), the series is graced by the fine pencils of Val Mayerik in all but the

final issue.
***Key Issues:** 3, 7, 8, 11. JFGSW*

Super Team Family

DC November 1975 to April 1978; 15 issues

Despite a silly name, this giant-sized comic featured super-hero team-ups that were better than the average Superman or Batman team-up tales. Issues 1, 4-7 were all reprint, the most notable being the Justice Society tale from All Star 32 in 4. The new material began in 8 with a well-produced revival of the Challengers of the Unknown. 11-14 have various team-ups connected with a central storyline involving the Atom and 15 offered the Flash and the New Gods. A lot of good stuff
***Key Issues:** 8-15. HY*

Super-Villain Team-Up

MARVEL August 1975 to October 1977 (14); November 1978; May 1979; June 1980; 17 issues; 2 GS March to June 1975

Featuring Dr Doom and Sub-Mariner in all but 6 issues, this series has been very erratic in quality. Some of the best were by Steve Englehart, including 5-7, which had the premiere appearance and origin of his tribute to Batman, the Shroud. Issue 4 crosses over with Marvel Spotlight (1) 27 and 8-10 cross over with Avengers 154-156. 9 has art by Jim Shooter. Although cancelled, the title was revived as an annual publication solely to retain the copyright on the term "Super-Villain." The last 2 issues featured the Red Skull and the Hatemonger.
***Key Issues:** 4-7. DWC*

Swamp Thing

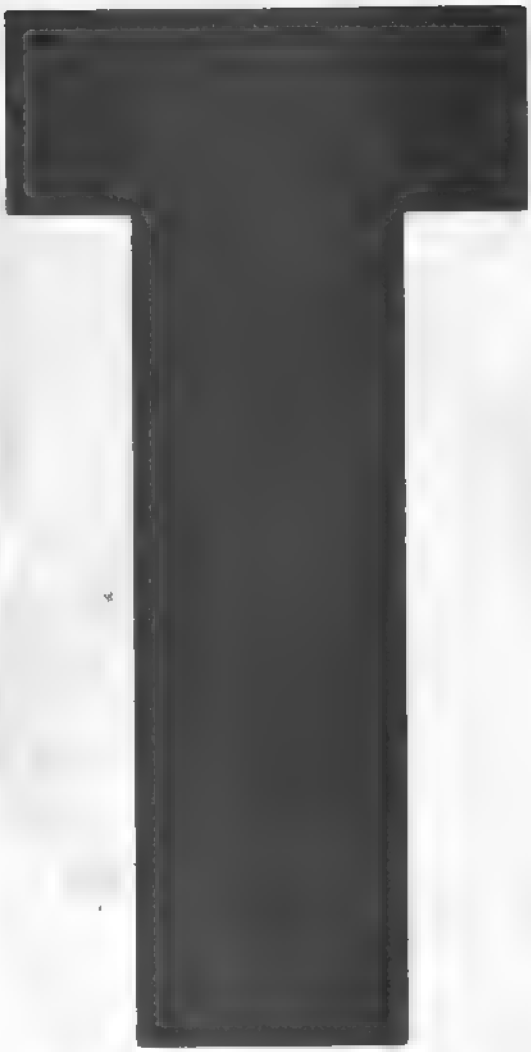
DC November 1972 to September 1976; 24 issues; 4 Annual 1977 to 1980

A series very highly rated by fandom and winner of several ACBA awards for the original creative team of Len Wein and Berni Wrightson (1-10). Alex Holland fell into a swamp while aflame and soaked with chemicals and emerged as a creature more plant than man, with immense strength and regenerative abilities. Despite the contention of every comics fan that this is a great series, the reason completely escapes me. "Night of the Bat" in 7 is a moody masterpiece, but everything else seems no more than average and the early issues certainly don't overshadow later issues by David Michelinie and Nestor Redondo. Buy the reprint annuals before sampling the over-priced originals.
***Key Issues:** 7, 12 FP*

Sword of Sorcery

DC March 1973 to December 1973; 5 issues

Probably the best sword and sorcery series ever done in comics, this starred Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd the Barbarian and the Gray Mouser in superb stories written by Denny O'Neil with great art by Howard Chaykin, Walt Simonson and Jim Starlin.
***Key Issues:** 1-5. HY*



Tales of Asgard

MARVEL October 1968; 1 issue

Featuring a mind-boggling 10 stories (must be some kind of record), this one-off, 64-page book reprinted the back-ups of the same name from Journey into Mystery (1) 97-106. ***APS***

Tales of Evil

ATLAS February 1975 to July 1975; 3 issues

Starting off as an ordinary horror mag containing the usual Atlas overdose of gore, Tales of Evil eventually produced 2 mundane stars in its third issue. Bog Beast is a self-explanatory rip-off and Man-Monster was yet another man turned into beast strip.
Not recommended. ***FP***

Tales of Ghost Castle

DC June 1975 to October 1975; 3 issues

A short-lived comic offering average mystery stories. Nothing impressive here. ***HY***

Tales of Suspense

MARVEL January 1959 to March 1968; 99 issues

Iron Man

39-99 All but a few of the Iron Man stories were written by Lee and the early ones in particular are very crude. They mostly consist of Tony Stark fighting the communists, modifying his armour and almost dying every other issue because his life-supporting armour needed recharging. None of them can be described as good, but 57, 60, 64 (all Black Widow and Hawkeye) 73-86 and 95-99 are the best; the latter run introducing Whitney Frost (Big M). This plotline continues into Iron Man and Sub-Mariner 1.

Captain America

59-99 Also written by Lee, this series suffers from an abundance of cliches, reminiscences back to World War II and of Bucky Barnes hallucinations and androids. Issues 64-71 consist entirely of Cap narrating some of his World War I exploits. All issues should be avoided with the exception of 66 (origin of the Red Skull), 77, 79-81 (fairly good Red Skull tale introducing the cosmic cube) and 92-94 (passable AIM story with the first appearance of Modok). Captain America continues with his name becoming the title of the comic from 100.

Tales of Suspense also features a Tales of the Watcher series in 49-58 which mainly consisted of the Watcher narrating morality stories of himself and/or other alien races.
APS

Tales of the Green Lantern Corps

DC May 1981 to July 1981; 3 issues

A lot of background information was imparted in the first issue of this mini-series, but the framing plot took over completely in the succeeding issues, which read like any 2 issues of GL's regular comic. Mike Barr and Len Wein wrote the script and art was by Joe Staton.
FP

Tales of the New Teen Titans

DC June 1982 to September 1982; 4 issues

This 4-part mini-series featured the 4 'new' Teen Titans, Cyborg, Raven, Changeling and Starfire. The series was written and drawn by the Teen Titan's regular team of Marv Wolfman and George Perez and gave an interesting and informative account of the pasts of the 4 Titans. Recommended.
Key Issues: *1-4.* ***HY***

Tales to Astonish

MARVEL January 1959 to March 1968; 101 issues

Ant/Giant Man

27, 35-69 Hank Pym's story in issue 27 was a better than average weird story about a man who invented a shrinking serum. It proved to be so popular that the character returned in 35. From 44 onwards, he was joined by the

Wasp (Janet Van Dyne) who became first his partner and then his girlfriend. In 49, he developed the ability to increase his height as well and he became generally known as Giant Man, although he could still shrink. All the stories were very simplistic, but by far the most redeeming aspect of the series was the mature relationship between Hank and Jan; it was virtually the only one in all the early '60s Marvel comics not to involve love triangles and repeated misunderstandings. Nearly all the tales are single issue stories; some of the best being in 44, 55 and 65.

Hulk

60-101 These early Hulk tales were very different for the time as they featured many continued stories; in fact he spent 25 of his 42-issue run fighting 3 villains (Leader, Secret Empire and Boomerang). Although he created the Hulk, like many other writers, Lee seemed to have no idea what to do with him. He has probably had proportionately more fight scene pages than any other character and the rest of each issue consisted entirely of General Ross' attempts to kill/capture him. There were no outstanding issues, but 73, 74 (last 2 Leader issues) and 93-96 were the best.

Sub-Mariner

70-101 These stories never generated much excitement, mainly because of the lack of variety. Nearly all the plots involved Namor battling either Krang or Byrrah for the throne of Atlantis of fighting insipid alien/undersea monsters. The only issue of interest is the last which introduces Destiny and the Serpent Crown of Lemuria. This story continues in Iron Man and Sub-Mariner 1.

The comic title changed to Hulk with 102.
APS

Tales to Astonish (2)

MARVEL December 1979 to January 1981; 14 issues

This is a cheap way of picking up reprints of the first 14 issues of Sub-Mariner.
APS

Targitt

ATLAS March 1975 to July 1975; 3 issues

Targitt was a vigilante with an ever-present gun and was the star of this truly terrible series. It's only worth buying to laugh at the fool on the letters page of issue 3, who compared it with the Spirit and predicted that Targitt would surpass Spider-Man in popularity.
FP

Tarzan

GOLD KEY (132) October 1962 to February 1972; 206 issues

The first 131 issues were under the Dell imprint. The Tarzan of the '60s really began when long-time artist Jesse Marsh left the strip to Russ Manning with 154. Manning wrote and drew the strip for 5 years and his work is better remembered than the syndicated strip at the time. When he left, the life went out of the Tarzan comic, despite brave tries by Doug Wildey and Mal Keefer among others. The move to DC comics was the best tonic possible. ***SW***

Tarzan

DC (207) April 1972 to February 1977; 258 issues

This was a well-produced adaptation of Edgar Rice-Burrough's most famous character by Joe Kubert. Kubert, who also drew many of the earlier DC issues, kept the jungle theme fairly interesting, which is more than either Gold Key or Marvel did. 207-210 adapt the origin story and particularly stand out. They also have John Carter back-ups. A good comic to beat your chest with.
Key Issues: *207-210.* ***HY***

Tarzan

MARVEL June 1977 to October 1979; 29 issues; 3 Annuals 1977 to 1979

Tarzan is Tarzan and there's nothing new that can be done with the character. Marvel didn't even try. All pretty mundane stuff and not worth getting unless you're a real Rice-Burrough's freak or a John Buscema fan. ***FP***

Tarzan Family

DC (60) December 1975 to December 1976; 66 issues

Carrying on the numbering from Korak, this giant-sized title upheld the fine tradition of DC adaptations of E.R. Burrough's famous character. It featured all new tales of Korak, John Carter and Pellucidar and some reprints, the best being Russ Manning's Tarzan.
HY

Team America

MARVEL From June 1982; 5 issues +

The word "contrived" was invented to describe this book. Licensed from yet another toy company, Team America comprises 5 (or maybe 6) motorcycle stunt-riders banded together for incredibly trumped-up reasons of their own plus an as yet unexplained empathic link. Based on zero premise and negative direction, it was conceived and initiated by Ed Hannigan and Jim Shooter and then turned over to Bill Mantlo who, incredibly, has managed to make it worse. Its simplicity may endear it to younger readers, but that's about all.
APS

Teen Titans

DC February 1966 to February 1973 (43); November 1976 to February 1978; 53 issues

Robin, Kid Flash and Aqualad shared an adventure in Brave and Bold 54 and another 2 with Wonder Girl before being given their own title. The early stories portrayed the Titans as approximately 13 years old in order to appeal to that age-group and they fought such enthralling menaces as Ding Dong Daddy and Mad Mod in some really embarrassing tales by Bob Haney.

Neal Adams drew 20-22 and the Titans grew up slightly. In 25, scripted by Steve Skeates, the Titans met Mr Jupiter, head of a research foundation, and began working for him. Bob Haney took over again in 32 and produced some excellent mystery tales (albeit with terrible dialogue), in which the Titans encountered witches, demons and arcane objects. These issues were extremely well drawn by either Nick Cardy or George Tuska. When the book was revived, Bob Rozakis handled the scripts and he once again aimed them at early teens and in a few years' time they'll be just as laughable as the early issues.
Key Issues: 32-43 FP

Tex Dawson

MARVEL January 1973 to June 1973; 3 issues

Reprinted from a '50s series, Tex Dawson was a western hero who "rode the western range with his fighting pals Whirlwind and Lightning." Whirlwind was a horse and Lightning was a wolf and Dawson talks to them both. An all-time low in westerns with bad art and predictable plots. Were kids really that naive once?
FP

Thor

MARVEL (126) From March 1966; 324 issues +; 9 Annuals 1966, 1970, 1971, 1976 to 1979, 1982, 1982; 1 GS 1975

The numbering continues from Journey into Mystery (1). Long spells of mediocrity have dogged this book. The main reason for this is the lack of any progress apparent throughout its run. Far too many issues have involved Loki, Pluto, Mangog or Ulik and the trolls and this has resulted in repetitious and unimaginative plotlines. The first 10 issues are quite interesting, especially 134, 135 (first High Evolutionary) and 136. However, with the exception of a period from 158-170 featuring Him (Warlock) and the origin of Galactus (168, 169), the rest of Lee's issues up to 193 can be disregarded. Thence, Gerry Conway's erratic run blossomed briefly during issues 221-228, but even these paled into insignificance in comparison with 231-236 which feature the return of Jane Foster, uncharacteristically first-rate dialogue and beautifully interwoven subplots. An excellent Len Wein 4-parter appeared in 242-245, but after that the book fell back into turgid mediocrity with all the (by now) cliched plots brought out for another airing. There was a quest, a search for Odin, a battle with the Destroyer and Loki took over Asgard yet again. Thank God for 2 good annuals during this period. Roy Thomas began scripting with 272 and immediately began reconciling the Thor of myth and legend with Marvel's version and relating the origin of Asgard. Helped along, and later taken over by Mark Gruenwald and Ralph Macchio, this took 30 issues and encompassed the Eternals, Wagner's "Siegfried" opera and 3 fine fill-in issues in 280-282. Despite some slow periods this was a fine series overall and requires reading in its entirety to be fully appreciated. The following issues were all good with Doug Moench's poignant tale of a priest questioning his faith (303), the return of Gabriel (305) and 304, displaying the comic ineptitude of the Wrecking Crew, standing out. Unfortunately, Moench became regular scripter with 308, and after a reasonable debut he has turned Thor into a title to play 'Spot the Cliche' with. This comic also sported a Tales of Asgard series in 126-145 (see Journey into Mystery (1) for synopsis) and an Origin of the Inhumans back-up strip in 146-152, which is of more interest to aficionados of Marvel Universe history than it is to seekers of vintage comics.
Key Issues: 134-136, 231-236, 242-245, 274, 280-282, 300, 301, 303-306, Annual 6. APSFP

Thrill O Rama

HARVEY October 1965 (1); September 1966 to December 1966; 3 issues

All 3 issues feature Bob Powell's Man in Black called Fate—a whimsical storyteller reprinted from the '50s comic named after him. Issues 2 and 3 also star the Pirana, an Aquaman clone, and his pets Bara and Cuda. The '50s reprints win hands down.
SW

Thunder Agents

TOWER November 1965 to December 1967 (17); September 1968 to November 1968 (19); November 1969; 20 issues

Thunder Agents were really like Shield, although besides the agents there were also 3 super-heroes; Dynamo—the guy with the super strength belt, Noman—the multi-bodied android and Menthor, a mind-reader. The writing was always puerile, but the title's great strength lay in the artists, who included Gil Kane, Wally Wood, Reed Crandall and Steve Ditko.
Key Issues: 1-8. DWC

Thunderbolt

CHARLTON January 1966 (1); (51) April 1966 to November 1967; 60 issues

For some reason Charlton started Thunderbolt in his own title, before letting him evict Son of Vulcan and continue the numbering. This was an adventure series starring Peter Cannon, a young man whose willpower brought forth tremendous reserves of strength. Drawn and, in earlier issues, written by Pete Morisi, the series seems a little directionless, probably due to PAM's static drawing style. The back-up in 54-58 is the Sentinels by Gary Friedrich and Sam Grainger and is interesting. The back-up in the last issue is the Prankster by Denny O'Neil and Jim Aparo, which show more promise than the whole run of Thunderbolt.
SW

Tiger Girl

GOLD KEY September 1968; 1 issue

Lily Taylor, circus aerialist, occasionally donned an orange and black striped bathing suit and boots, borrowed the circus tiger and fought crime as Tiger Girl. This is all but rather mundane. The writer is uncredited,

but rumoured to be Jerry Siegel, and the art is by Jack Sparling.
FP

Tigerman

ATLAS April 1975 to September 1975; 3 issues

Scientist Dr Hill injected himself with tiger chromosomes to give himself the strength and ability of a tiger. He fought crime in New York and looked a right jerk. Decidedly mundane.
FP

Time Bandits

MARVEL February 1982; 1 issue

A British Marvel adaptation which works well and is improved by being complete in 1 issue. Whilst the book doesn't quite catch the inner craziness of the film, it does manage the flavour—recommended for a good read.
DWC

Time Warp

DC November 1979 to July 1980, 5 issues

Another attempt at creating an sf anthology similar to the horror format, this dollar comic featured many good individual tales, but the book as a whole suffered from predictable plots and clichéd endings. The best stories appeared in the earlier issues, particularly issue 2.
Key Issues: DWC

Toka

DELL October 1964 to January 1967; 10 issues

You can bet that this "Jungle King" didn't set too many people on fire back when Gold Key's Tarzan was being written and drawn by Russ Manning. Completely forgettable. ***SW***

Tomahawk

DC October 1950 to June 1972; 140 issues

The adventures of a rebel band of Rangers during the American War of Independence. This title hails from the start of the '50s and with scripts by the likes of Bill Finger and drab art by Fred Ray, you'd think that you were still there. Progress finally came with a new look for Tomahawk: Neal Adams covers, stories by Bob Kanigher and Frank Thorne art, all of which led to a drop in sales. Experiments continued with Hawk, son of Tomahawk, set 30 years after the earlier stories. This shared the title with some choice reprints and Joe Kubert's beautiful Firehair strip. Any issue after 116 is worth a look, before that, forget it.
SW

Tomb of Darkness

MARVEL (9) July 1974 to November 1976; 23 issues

More reprints of '50s horror stories, the first 8 issues being titled Beware. The only issue of interest is 22. The lead character's name in one of the reprints has been relettered as "Pym." This is chronologically considered as the first story about Hank Pym.
FPAPS

Tomb of Dracula

MARVEL April 1972 to April 1979 (69); August 1979; 70 issues; 5 GS June 1974 to June 1975

Marvel has a knack of taking a fad or a cliche and turning it into a worthwhile comic. Such was the case with Dracula. The first 6 issues by Conway, Goodwin and Fox introduced some supporting characters without developing Dracula from the cinema cliche. Marv Wolfman became regular writer with 7, joining artist Gene Colan, and Tom Palmer became inker with 12. It was a team that lasted until the book was cancelled. Wolfman fleshed out the regular cast, introduced Blade, Quincy Harker and the concept of Drac's diary and gave Dracula the character of a man who knew what he was and enjoyed it, yet still retained an inexplicable nobility. Wolfman combined multi-issue tales with interlude issues and issues such as 25, introducing a vampire detective, in which Dracula is only a peripheral character. Highlights include Blade killing Dracula and his revival (13-14), 2 battles against Dr Sun (19-21 and 38-42) and some of the later issues in which Dracula's vampiric abilities were removed by Satan. An excellent 1-issue tale can be found in 54, when Dracula's son is born. The first giant-sized issue is called Giant Size Chillers and is the only GS issue that ties into the continuity of the main book.
Key Issues: *12-14, 19-21, 25-29, 37-42, 46-49, 51-56, 59-62, 66, 67, Chillers 1.* ***FP***

Tor

DC June 1975 to April 1976; 6 issues

Introduced with a whole slew of new fantasy characters in 1975, Tor was a revival of Joe Kubert's '50s caveman series. Only the first issue contained new material and the reprints seem very dated today.
FP

Tower of Shadows

MARVEL September 1969 to January 1971; 9 issues; 1 Special 1971

Really a continuation of Marvel's '50s horror tales, but produced by then current Marvel staff. There's stuff by Thomas, Adams, Wein, Smith, Colan, Steranko and Wood among others. From issue 6 there was only one new tale, backed by reprints. The title changed to Creatures on the Loose with 10.
Key Issues: *1-6.* ***FP***

Tragg and the Sky Gods

OLD KEY June 1975 to February 1977; 8 issues

A race of humanoid aliens land on prehistoric earth and genetically alter 2 unborn children to endow them with above average intelligence. 20 years later 1 of the alien spaceship crash-lands on earth and occupants set about enslaving the population with only Tragg and Lorn to oppose them. As is usually with 1970s Gold Key titles, 6 pages of plot were stretched over an entire issue, making for tedious reading.
FP

Trigger Twins

DC March 1973; 1 issue

Western reprints featuring the twins and a great Pow Wow Smith story by Fox and Infantino make for an interesting one shot.
SW

Turok, Son of Stone

GOLD KEY December 1954 to January 1980; 125 issues; 1 Special 1966

A 19th century Red Indian, Turok, and his young companion, Andar, wandered through a series of deep caverns to emerge in a land where dinosaurs and Neanderthal Man had never become extinct. Using their wits to adapt to the environment, Turok and Andar starred in some very entertaining stories that transcended a dull concept. Emphasis was placed on realism, and the artist in the earlier issues (Russ Manning?) obviously researched his dinosaurs, as they are all identifiable. All pre-1970 issues are worth a glance, and if you like one you'll probably like them all. Sadly, by 1970, standards slipped consistently and eventually sloppy plotting and art led to cancellation.
FP

The Twist

DELL September 1962; 1 issue

Yes, that's right folks, a comic devoted to Chubby Checkers' dance. It really has to be read to be believed.
Key Issues: 1. FP

Two Gun Kid

MARVEL March 1948 to November 1949 (10); December 1953 to April 1961 (59); November 1962 to March 1968 (92), July 1970 to April 1977, 136 issues

Lawyer Matt Hawk secretly keeps law and order in the wild west of the 1870s as the Two Gun Kid. Lee and Kirby revamped the 50s masked man in 1962. An extraordinary sidekick named Boom Boom followed 4 issues later and success was assured. The secret identity twist and humourous touches made this entertaining reading and the mid-'60s team of Skeates and Ayers produced some noteworthy stories. Issues from 99 onwards are reprint.
SW

2001, A Space Odyssey

MARVEL December 1976 to September 1977; 10 issues

Jack Kirby's attempts to go beyond the film resulted in a string of boring, repetitive stories and quick cancellation. The last 3 issues introduced Machine Man.
DWC

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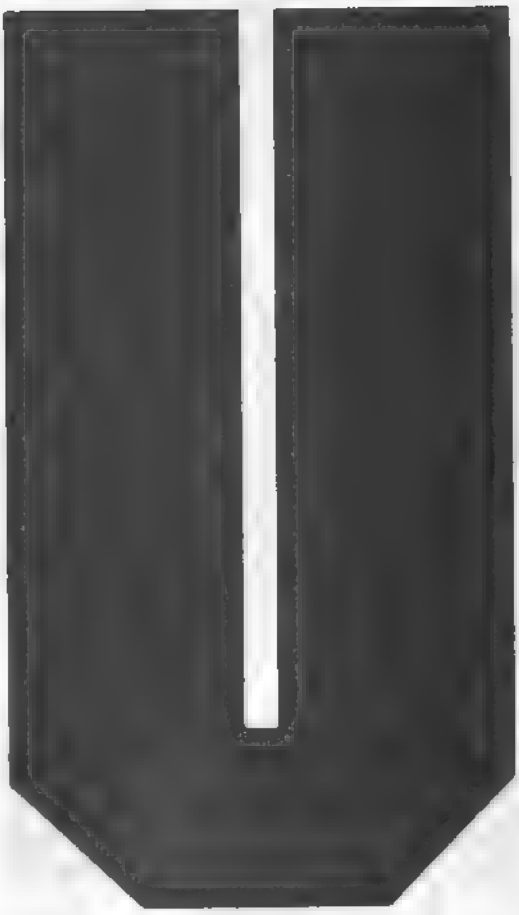

Uncanny Tales

MARVEL December 1973 to October 1975; 12 issues

Another horror reprint mag. Did you know that between December 1973 and December 1975, Marvel had 8 of these mags running concurrently? Someone must like them.
FP

Undersea Agent

TOWER January 1966 to March 1967; 6 issues

The adventures of Davy Jones (!) Undersea Agent weren't the highspot of Tower Comics' short lifetime. Most of the plots were idiotic and they weren't helped by the art, which was, with few exceptions, dreadful. Gil Kane drew stories in 3-6.
SW

Unearthly Spectaculars

HARVEY September 1965 (1), December 1966 to March 1967; 3 issues

This was a curious umbrella title where the contents varied from execrable to excellent. The cover stars were Tiger Boy who could change his body into a number of shapes, including a tiger with a boy's head, a sublimely ridiculous concept, and Jack Q. Frost, whose freezing powers were pitted against the inane Lord Lazee. Better by far were Miracles Inc, a spoof superhero strip by Wally Wood (2) and Joe Orlando (3), Clawfang the Barbarian by Al Williamson and the superb Earthman by Wally Wood in issue 2. The highlight of issue 3 is an Archie Goodwin/Reed Crandall reprint, Hermit.
Key Issues: 2, 3. FP

Unexpected

DC March 1956 to May 1982; 222 issues; 1 Special 1977

This comic, once known as Tales of the Unexpected, offered stories that featured an unexpected twist at the end for much of its early period. Most involved a science fiction theme and there were a few series, such as the Space Ranger in 43-82. Throughout the '70s, the usual average mystery stories have predominated, but there are a few nice pieces of art here and there by the likes of Berni Wrightson (116, 119, 121, 129) and Wally Wood (122, 133, 137, 138). Issues 189-198 were in the dollar comic format and incorporated House of Secrets and Witching Hour. Johnny Peril returned as regular feature between 205 and 213. Notable artists before cancellation include Trevor Von Eeden, Mike Zeck and Keith Giffen.
HY

Unknown Soldier

DC (205) May 1977 to October 1982; 268 issues

This comic carried on from Star Spangled War Stories, keeping the same creative team of Haney and Ayers, who always produced a reasonable job. Back-ups have included Capt Fear (a native Caribbean hero), Baloon Buster, Dateline:Frontline and Enemy Ace by Kanigher and Severin. The final issue featured the showdown between the Unknown Soldier and Adolf Hitler.
HY

Untold Legend of the Batman

DC July 1980 to September 1980; 3 issues

The second DC mini-series, although having an unconvincing plot by Len Wein, is a nice romp down memory lane for all Batman fans. John Byrne drew the first issue and Jim Aparo the other 2. The whole series is a collection of scenes from earlier issues, and although it highlights the amazing number of coincidences in the Batman legend, it is worthwhile reading.
Key Issues: 1-3. DWC

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Vault of Evil

MARVEL February 1973 to November 1975; 23 issues

Oh, you guessed it from the title did you? Yes, this is yet another set of nifty horror reprints from Marvel's inexhaustible supply.

FP

Vengeance Squad

CHARLTON July 1975 to May 1976; 6 issues

This poor title from writer Joe Gill featured a group of crime fighters who ran through a series of nondescript adventures. The book is only interesting for its back-up feature, which starred Mauser, the seedy detective from E-Man by the same team of Nic Cuti and Joe Staton. The stories have a great whimsical humour and make up for the awful lead feature.

DWC

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Wanted

DC August 1972 to September 1973; 9 issues

A good series of reprints mixing golden and silver age stories. Most issues can be recommended.
DWC

War is Hell

MARVEL January 1973 to October 1975; 15 issues

Although the first 8 issues reprinted '50s war stories and a couple of issues of Sgt Fury, Chris Claremont was handed the scripting chores for his first regular series with 9 and turned it into an interesting title. Billed as "The war mag dedicated to the end of war," it starred the spirit of a dead soldier, John Kowalski, who was forced by Death to relive the horrors of war by animating the bodies of war casualities at the moment of their death. This must be one of the better war comics on account of its unique approach and avoidance of all the cliches and twist endings that are usually so prominent. ***APS***

Warlock

MARVEL August 1972 to October 1973 (8); October 1975 to November 1976; 15 issues

Originally known as Him, Warlock was created by 4 scientists trying to produce a "perfect man of the future" back in Fantastic Four 66, 67. Possessing a great intelligence, golden skin and invulnerability to virtually everything, he saw the evil of his makers' ways and left Earth to seek his destiny among the stars. Marvel Premiere 1, 2 and Warlock 1-8 chronicle his life on counter-Earth, a copy of Marvel Earth orbiting on the far side of the sun, but without any other super-heroes. His attempts to quash the evils of mankind (personified by the Man-Beast) finally succeeded in the run's conclusion in Hulk 176-178. Very disillusioned with all that he had experienced, he once again sought the stars for solitude and became involved with the Magus in Strange Tales 178-181 and Warlock 9-11. After the second cancellation, his storyline (and life) were concluded in Avengers Annual 7 and Marvel Two-in-One Annual 2. It's difficult to fault any issue of Warlock, especially in the second run which was all written and drawn by Jim Starlin who turned him into a fascinatingly introspective and morose character. He formed a perfect contrast to his light-hearted companion Pip the Troll; issue 12 was a successor to the intricacies of the previous ones. The first run by Roy Thomas and Mike Friedrich is also absorbing, but is often forgotten in the wake of the great Starlin issues.
Key Issues: *1, 2, 5-7, 9-12, 15.* ***APS***

Warlord

DC February 1976 to April 1976 (2); From November 1976; 62 issues +; 1 Annual 1982

Creator, writer and artist Mike Grell has taken the old idea of a hidden land within Earth and used it to its fullest potential. Although writing and art have never been spectacular, the series has not been boring or predictable. Grell has used some nice concepts, such as merging science with sword and sorcery, giving the series that something special. Back-up features have included Wizard World, OMAC, Claw, Dragonsword, Kamandi and Arion, Lord of Atlantis. Issue 48 contained a free insert starring Arak.
Key Issues: *24, 28.* ***HY***

Weird Mystery Tales

DC August 1972 to November 1975, 24 issues

Yet another average mystery comic, this title offered a few good stories with nice art amongst the mundane majority. The first 3 issues do, however, stand out since they contain Jack Kirby stories which were originally planned for his black and white magazine, Spirit World.
HY

Weird Suspense

ATLAS February 1975 to July 1975; 3 issues

This title featured a hero who was tasteless even by Atlas standards and must have a strong claim to being the tackiest hero ever. The Tarantula was the creation of Mike Fleisher and he (the Tarantula, not Fleisher) ensnared his victims in a web, injected them with poison and ate them. Not to be taken before meals and only for those with a strong stomach.
FP

Weird War Tales

DC From October 1971; 116 issues +

This is the usual DC mystery story comic, the only

difference being that all the tales have a war theme. There are gems in the compost here (Marshall Rogers drew 51 and 52, Miller's in 64 and 68). More recently the comic has featured 2 ordinary series: The Creature Commandos and G.I. Robot.
FP

Weird Western Tales

DC (12) July 1972 to August 1980; 70 issues

Carrying on the numbering from All Star Western with 12, the first few issues saw Jonah Hex ousting all other features from the book. He'd done so by 19 and despite the book almost being cancelled more than once, he moved into his own series after 38. All the Hex stories are good, the best being 27 (where Jonah becomes involved with an early women's lib movement) and 35, when he enters a town where hanging is treated as a form of entertainment. In issue 39 Brian Savage, Scalphunter, a white man raised by the Kiowa Indians, took over the title until it was scrapped. Later issues and some nice Gerry Conway stories and Scalphunter is now an occasional back-up in Jonah Hex's book.
Key Issues: 22-25, 27, 34-48. FP

Weird Wonder Tales

MARVEL December 1973 to May 1977; 22 issues

Yet another comic that reprinted the horror tales produced by Marvel in the '50s. Venus is featured in 16-18 and Dr Druid in the next 4 issues, but the only issue of interest is 7. That featured the individual stories of the characters who later formed the Headmen, predominant villains in Steve Gerber's Defenders. Even that is only for completists, as the stories are no better than the ususal '50s reprints.
FP

Weird Worlds

DC September 1972 to February 1974 (9); November 1974; 10 issues

Issues 1-7 featured Edgar Rice Burrough's John Carter and Pellucidar, both brilliantly adapted by Wein, Wolfman and O'Neil. Issues 8-10 starred Iron Wolf, a superb science and sorcery series set in the future, created by Denny O'Neil and Howard Chaykin. Highly recommended.
Key Issues: 1-10. HY

Welcome Back Kotter

DC November 1976 to April 1978; 10 issues

A nice, humourous title based on an American TV series about a teacher, Kotter, and his misfit pupils. Not as good as the Bash Street Kids in Britain's Beano, but then what is?
HY

Werewolf

DELL December 1966 to April 1967; 3 issues

Of the trio of Dell heroes named after screen monsters, this is the most pathetic. Major Wiley Wolf of Secret Defence Unit One's adventures are the worst drawn comics of the '60s. Tony Tallarico, take a bow.
SW

Werewolf by Night

MARVEL September 1972 to March 1977; 43 issues; 5 GS July 1974 to July 1975

How this series managed to last as long as it did is beyond me. Owing to an ancient hereditary curse, Jack Russell turned into a werewolf for the 3 nights of every month when the moon was fullest once he had reached his 18th birthday. Marvel decided that this strip was most suited to the supernatural/fantasy vein (as far as I can see, it wasn't suited to anything) and since the whole series is related by Jack Rusell, a typically cynical American teenager, his narration produces a grating contrast to the mood of the stories. Gerry Conway was the only scripter to display any feel for the strip. He wrote the first 3 appearances in Marvel Spotlight (1) 2-4 and the plot continued directly into this series. But after Conway left in issue 4, every other scripter managed to turn out some utterly ridiculous coincidences and plot events, in addition to a sense of pacing that would shame a legless corpse. The first Giant Size issue, which is titled Giant Size Creatures and guest stars Tigra, is quite reasonable. Mike Ploog drew some nice issues in the first 16 and 31-33 (the latter 2 introducing Moon Knight by Doug Moench) were acceptable, but otherwise. ..
Key Issues: 1. APS

Western Action

ATLAS February 1975; 1 issue

A cliche-ridden lead story starring Kid Cody, Gunfighter was backed up by an equally fatuous tale of the Commanche Kid, a white boy brought up by Red Indians. "Comics are entertainment" proclaimed Atlas all over their text pages. This wasn't.
APS

Western Gunfighters

MARVEL August 1970 to November 1975; 33 issues

The first 7 issues (all giant-sized) each contained 1 original lead story of the western Ghost Rider by the almost inevitable combination of Gary Friedrich and Dick Ayers. The back-up strips plus the latter 26 issues reprinted a variety of '50s western tales including Apache Kid, Wyatt Earp, Tex Dawson and Kid Colt.
APS

Western Kid

MARVEL December 1971 to August 1972; 5 issues

This reprinted 4 truly bad Tex Dawson tales per issue, some with bad Romita art. Someone must have bought these, because Tex was later given his own title.
FP

Western Team-Up

MARVEL November 1973; 1 issue

A one-shot title that contained reprints of the Rawhide Kid, the Dakota Kid and the Gunsmoke Kid by Jack Davis.
FP

What If

MARVEL From February 1977; 35 issues +

Conceived as Marvel's alternative to the much derided DC imaginary stories, What If takes critical moments in the history of Marvel-Earth and presents them as they occurred in parallel universes, where 1 factor diverged from the tale that was familiar to the reader, creating a totally different scenario. An example is issue 20, in which the Avengers intervene in the Kree-Skrull war (detailed in Avengers 89-97), without the aid of Rick Jones. Given the scope of the series, it has been very disappointing so far, with the trite and the trivial outnumbering good stories by about 4 to 1. The recommended issues have the FF in 1, the Invaders in 4, a story in which Conan is transported through time into the present (13) and Spider-Man using his powers to become a TV star rather than a super-hero, in 19, an alternative ending to X-Men 137 in 27, a teaming of all Marvel's omnipotent characters (far better than the concept sounds) in 32 and a very funny all humour issue, 34.
Key Issues: *1, 4, 13, 19, 20, 27, 32, 34.* ***FP***

Wheelie and the Chopper Bunch

CHARLTON July 1975 to July 1976; 7 issues

Often quoted by artist John Byrne as some of his favourite work. This comic is based on the Hanna-Barbera cartoon show of the same name, featuring sentient cars.
SW

Where Creatures Roam

MARVEL July 1970 to September 1971; 8 issues

Another reprint title, this time with '50s monster stories. It's obviously cheaper than paying for new material.
FP

Where Monsters Dwell

MARVEL January 1970 to October 1975; 38 issues

The longest running of all the Marvel '50s reprint horror titles
FP

The Witching Hour

DC March 1969 to October 1978, 85 issues

One of DC's horror-mystery titles, featuring 2-4 short stories, with introductions to each by the comic's 3 resident witches: Mildred, Mordred and the slinky Cynthia. I must admit to having a weakness for the 3 witches, who were drawn in the earlier issues by either Alex Toth or Neal Adams. The stories were good too, especially the first 16 or so issues.
Key Issues: *10, 14.* ***SW***

Wolverine

MARVEL September 1982 to December 1982; 4 issues

Wolverine alone. Wolverine in Japan. Wolverine and Mariko. Wolverine by Claremont. Wolverine by Miller. Wolverine a la Daredevil. Wolverine berserk. Wolverine in a 4-issue limited series. Buy it.
Key Issues: *1-4.* ***APS***

Wonder Woman

DC From Summer 1942; 296 issues + 1 Spectacular 1978

This comic has changed direction more times than I've had a hot dinner. It was quite stable until the mid-'60s. The stories were light-hearted and usually involved Steve Trevor, unless they were centered on Paradise Island with Wonder Woman's friends and family (Remember Wonder Tot?). Issues 178-203 featured the dramatic new-look Wonder Woman, when the Amazon lost her powers to become plain Diana Prince, martial arts expert, trained by a blind oriental named I Ching! This was a well-written run of issues influenced by the editing of Mike Sekowsky. Even his art was above average. The stories featured anything from sword and sorcery (Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser in 202), to fantasy, the Gods of Olympus, King Arthur of Camelot and many pure adventure stories. 212-222 had Wonder Woman regaining her powers and performing 12 tasks in order to see if she was suitable to rejoin the JLA, which she had left after losing her abilities. Steve Trevor had died during the martial arts period, and a good new direction was started with his revival, but this promising story line was interrupted by issues 228-243 featuring the Earth 2 Wonder Woman set during World War II. This was to tie in with the Wonder Woman TV series, also set in that period. The excellent 1978 spectacular showed the Gods of Olympus intervening in the war. The Earth 1 Wonder Woman returned in 244 and Steve Trevor died for a second time. Another change of direction came in 269 with Wonder Woman returning to Paradise Island. Her origin was virtually duplicated as she returned to "man's world" accompanied by a Steve Trevor from an alternate dimension. The most recent new direction began in 288, after a preview in DC Comics Presents 41. The old eagle symbol came off her chest to be replaced by a double 'W' design for marketing reasons. The comic has been quite interesting since then, produced by Roy Thomas and Gene Colan, although a much promoted 3-parter in 291-293 which guest starred many of DC's heroines was very disappointing. Expect another new direction soon. The Huntress by Paul Levitz and Joe Staton has been the well-handled back-up strip since 271.
Key Issues: *178-203, Spectacular 1978.* ***HY***

World of Krypton

DC July 1979 to September 1979; 3 issues

DC's first mini-series chronicled all the events surrounding Superman's parents, Jor-El and Lara, up to Krypton exploding. A well-produced reference for Superman fans.
HY

World's Finest

DC From Spring 1941; 284 issues +

The stories of the world's finest team of Superman and Batman in the early 1960s were fun to read, but nothing very special. The mid-'60s, however, produced many memorable stories that relied on plot rather than great super-hero action or characterisation, a characteristic of editor Mort Weisinger's books. Weisinger's connection with the Superman range of comics clearly influenced the stories and setting, which were always more suited to the man from Krypton rather than the Batman. Julie Schwarz edited the book for issues 198-214 and he turned it into a Superman team-up comic. People such as Green Arrow, Dr Fate, Vigilante and Martian Manhunter guest starred in some nice stories. Murray Boltinoff took over as editor from 215, bringing Bob Haney with him. He returned the Batman to the book in a series of abominable and embarrassing stories, the Super Sons of Superman and Batman standing out as particularly bad. Issues 244-282 were in the dollar comic format, and while the Superman/Batman team-ups were as inane as ever, the other features sharing the comic were reasonably handled. They included Various JLA members in solo series, the Creeper, Shazam and Black Lightning. Since the comic returned to a regular format, a 'new direction' has begun for the Superman/Batman team. On the whole, this comic hasn't lived up to its name.
Key Issues: *141-151, 159, 163, 164, 169, 171, 175, 176, 178, 180, 198, 199, 204, 208, 212, 214.* ***HY***

World's Unknown

MARVEL May 1973 to August 1974; 8 issues

For it first 6 issues, this comic ran rather good adaptations of SF novels, by the Marvel staff. The last 2 issues featured an adaptation of the film screenplay for "The Golden Voyage of Sinbad," by Len Wein and George Tuska.
FP

Wulf the Barbarian

ATLAS February 1975 to September 1975; 4 issues

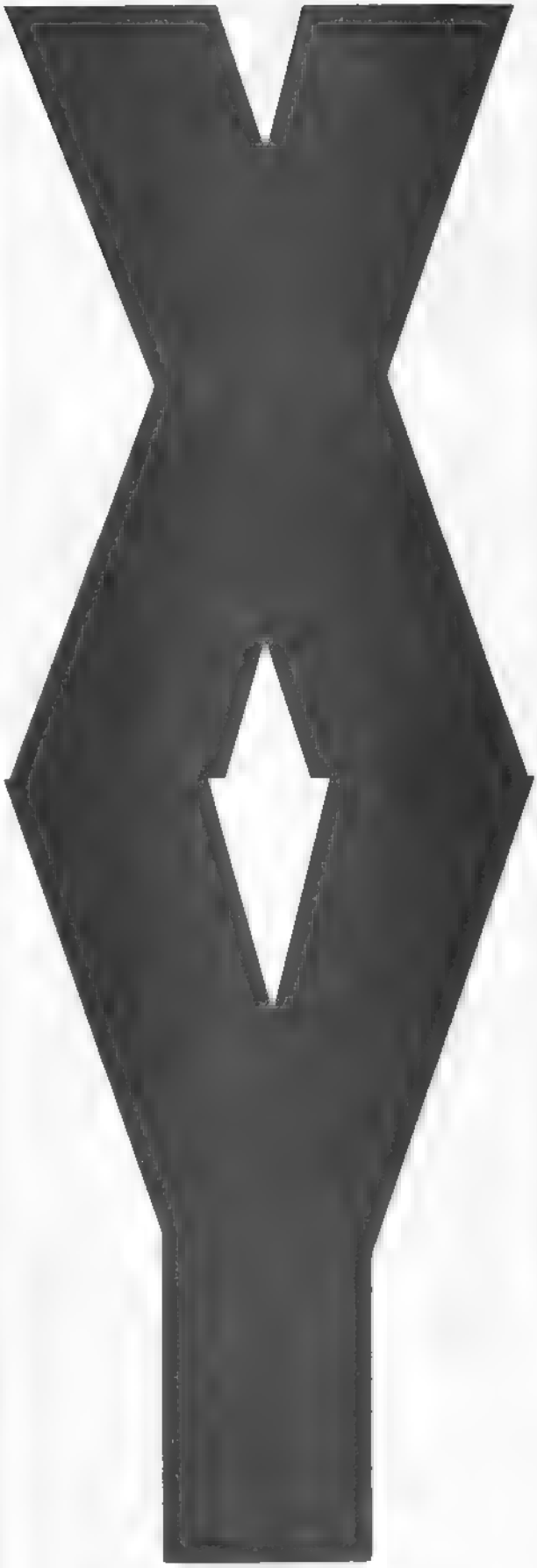
The 1 comic generic staple that Atlas managed to do a consistently good job on was Barbarians. Wulf was no exception. Born of royal stock, Wulf was searching for the sorcerer whose forces overthrew and killed his parents. Even 3 artists in 4 issues don't detract from the overall enjoyment of the series.
Key Issues: 1-4. FP

Wyatt Earp

MARVEL November 1955 to June 1960 (29); October 1972 to June 1973; 34 issues

Exploits of the famous frontier marshall reprinted from the 1950s. The stories are by Stan Lee and Dick Ayers and are all flaccid western fare, as are the accompanying western reprints by Lee with such talents as Williamson, Crandall and Torres on art. This revival was deservedly short lived.
SW

CHARACTERS © 1983 DC COMICS



X-Men

MARVEL September 1963 to March 1970 (66); December 1970 to April 1975 (93); From August 1975; 162 issues +; 6 Annuals 1970, 1971, 1979 to 1982; 2 GS June 1975 to September 1975

Cyclops, Beast, Iceman, Marvel Girl and Angel were all mutants with an extra ability over the norm, hence their team name: the X-Men. Early issues were by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby and were excellent until the conclusion of the first Sentinels story (16). Roy Thomas took over the book and, with Werner Roth art, he produced a fine 2-parter in 22-23. Thomas combined fights against old enemies with the omnipresent threat of Factor Three. Some individual issues, such as 28 (introducing the Banshee), were good, but the series dragged, with Factor Three being anticlimatic when eventually revealed. They were defeated in 39 and Gary Friedrich began writing the book after a couple of nondescript fillers, with 44. Arnold Drake followed in a period which was the X-Men's nadir, depsite art by Jim Steranko in 50 and 51 and Barry Smith's Kirby swipes in 53. The X-Men needed rescuing by someone more powerful than they were, and so Roy Thomas returned with issue 56, bringing Neal Adams with him. The resulting 10 issues, including a fill-in by Don Heck, were excellent, but the book peaked too late and 67-93 reprinted issues 13-45. In June 1975, Giant Size X-Men 1 saw Len Wein introduce a new team of X-Men, Colossus, Banshee, Nightcrawler, Wolverine and Storm, with Cyclops remaining from the old team. Sprite later replaced Banshee. Chris Claremont began scripting with the first revived issue, 94, and the rest is history. For 5 years Claremont, with artists Dave Cockrum (94-105, 107) and John Byrne (108, 109, 111-143) produced an excellent run that picked up Eagle Awards by the truckful. However, some inspiration appears to have departed with John Byrne. Claremont only occasionally reaches former heights and Dave Cockrum as replacement artist seems unable to match his earlier work on the title.

Key Issues: *1-16, 22, 23, 28, 29, 57-63, 97-105, 107-109, 111-114, 120-124, 129-142, 150, 153, 161, Annual 5, GS 1.* ***FP***

Yang

CHARLTON November 1973 to May 1976; 13 issues

Usual Chinese kung fu, this time set in the 1890s in China and the wild west and featuring the traditional yellow peril. Joe Gill's writing is okay if you want to get outside the more common New York settings, though the art by Warren Satter is nothing special.

DWC

FANTACO'S CHRONICLES SERIES ANNUAL #1 CONTEST

Who can list the most titles not in this book which should be!

RULES, REGULATIONS, & ETC.

1. All entries must be postmarked no later than June 30, 1983 and received no later than July 15, 1983.

2. A first prize of 10 $25 00 gift certificates (total of $250.00 in gift certificates) good only at FantaCo (in person **or** through mail order) will be awarded to the person who lists the largest number of legitimate comic titles which belong in FantaCo's Chronicles Series Annual #1.

3. A second prize of 4 $25 00 gift certificates (total of $100.00 in gift certificates) good only at FantaCo (in person **or** through mail order) will be awarded to the person who lists the second largest number of legitimate comic titles which belong in FantaCo's Chronicles Series Annual #1.

4. A third prize of 2 $25 00 gift certificates (total of $50.00 in gift certificates) good only at FantaCo (in person **or** through mail order) will be awarded to the person who lists the third largest number of legitimate comic titles which belong in FantaCo's Chronicles Series Annual #1.

5. There is a limit of one entry per person.

6. Entrants cannot be employees of FantaCo or immediate relatives of employees of FantaCo.

7. The decision of the judges is final.

8. Winners will be notified by mail no later than September 15, 1983.

9. A list of the winners will be printed in the first issue of the Chronicles to be published after the results are known.

10. A list of the winners will be available after September 15, 1983 upon request with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Appendix I: Alphabetical List of Titles

Action
Adventure
Adventures Into the Unknown
Adventures on the Planet of the Apes
Alarming Adventures
All American Men of War
All Out War
All Star
All Star Squadron
All Star Western
Amazing Adult Fantasy
Amazing Adventures (1)
Amazing Adventures (2)
Amazing Fantasy
Angel and the Ape
Anthro
Aquaman
Arak
Army at War
Astonishing Tales
Atom
Atom and Hawkman
Avengers
Barbarians
[illegible]
Batman
Batman Family
Battle Classics
Battlestar Galactica
Beowulf
Beware
Bionic Woman
Black Cat
Black Goliath
Blackhawk
Black Hole
Black Lightning
Black Magic
Black Panther
Blade Runner
Blazing Battle Tales
Blitzreig
Blue Beetle (1)
Blue Beetle (2)
Bomba the Jungle Boy
Boris Karloff Tales of Mystery
Boy Commandos
Brain Boy
The Brave and the Bold
Brothers of the Spear
The Brute
Captain Action
Captain America
Captain Atom
Captain Canuck
Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew
Captain Marvel (MF Enterprises)
Captain Marvel (Marvel)
Captain Marvel Presents the Terrible 5
Captain Nice
Captain Savage
Captain Storm
Captain Victory
The Cat
Challengers of the Unknown
Chamber of Chills
Chamber of Darkness
Champions
Champion Sports
Charlton Bullseye
Charlton Premiere
Cheyenne Kid
Claw
Combat Kelly
Conan
Cougar
Creatures on the Loose
The Creeper
Crypt of Shadows
Dagar
Daredevil
Dark Mansion of Forbidden Love
Dazzler
DC Comics presents
DC Special
DC Superstar Holiday Special
DC Superstars
Dead of Night
Defenders
Demon
Demon Hunter
Destroyer Duck
Destructor
Detective
Devil Dinosaur
Doc Savage
Doctor Solar
Doctor Strange
Dr Strange
Doom Patrol
Doomsday + 1
Doorway to Nightmare
Double Dare Adventures
Dracula
Dragonslayer
Dynamic Classics
Dynamo
EC Classic Reprints
E-Man
Emergency
Eternals
Fantastic Four
Fantastic Four Roast
Fantasy Masterpieces (1)
Fantasy Masterpieces (2)
Fatman the Human Flying Saucer
F.B.I.
Fear Fighting American
Fighting 5
Firestorm
First Issue Special
Five-Star Super-Hero Spectacular
Flash
Flash Gordon
The Fly
Flyman
Forbidden Tales of Dark Mansion
Forbidden Worlds
Forever People
For Your Eyes Only
Four-Star Spectacular
The Fox and the Crow
Frankenstein
The Frankenstein Monster
Freedom Fighters
Fright
Frogmen
From Beyond the Unknown
Fury of Firestorm
The Geek
Ghost Rider (1)
Ghost Rider (2)
Ghosts
Giant Size Chillers (2)
Giant Size Super-Heroes
G.I. Combat
G.I. Joe
Godzilla
Gold Key Spotlight
Gorgo
Green Lantern
Grim Ghost
Gunhawks
Hands of the Dragon
The Hawk and the Dove
Hawkman
The Heap
Herbie
Hercules (Charlton)
Hercules (Marvel)
Hercules Unbound
Hot Wheels
House of Mystery
House of Secrets
House of Yang
Howard the Duck
Hulk
Human Fly
Human Torch
Inferior 5
Inhumans
Invaders
Iron Fist
Iron Jaw
Iron Man
Iron Man and Sub-Mariner
Isis
Jaguar
Jigsaw
Jimmy Olsen
John Carter
Johnny Thunder
Joker
Jonah Hex
Journey Into Mystery (1)
Journey Into Mystery (2)
Judomaster
Jungle Action
Justice Inc.
Justice League of America
Kamandi
Karate Kid
Ka-Zar (1)
Ka-Zar (2)
Ka-Zar (3)
Kid Colt, Outlaw
King Conan
Kobra
Kona, Monarch of Monster Isle
Kong
Korak
The Krypton Chronicles
Kull
Kung-Fu Fighter
Legion of Super-Heroes (1)
Legion of Super-Heroes (2)
Logan's Run
Lois Lane
Lost in Space
Machine Man
Madame Xanadu
Madhouse
Magnus, Robot Fighter
Man-Bat
Mandrake
Man From Atlantis
Man-Thing (1)
Man-Thing (2)
M.A.R.S. Patrol
Marvel Adventures
Marvel and DC Present
Marvel Chillers
Marvel Collectors Item Classics
Marvel Double Feature
Marvel Fanfare
Marvel Feature (1)
Marvel Feature (2)
Marvel Premiere
Marvel Presents
Marvel Spectacular
Marvel Spotlight (1)
Marvel Spotlight (2)
Marvel Super Action
Marvel Super-Hero Contest of Champions
Marvel Super-Heroes
Marvel Tales
Marvel Team-Up
Marvel Triple Action
Marvel Two-In-One
Marvel's Greatest Comics
Master of Kung-Fu
[illegible] of War
Metal Men
Metamorpho
Microbots
Micronauts
Mighty Comics Presents
Mighty Crusaders
Mighty Hercules
Mighty Marvel Western
Mighty Samson
Mister Miracle

Monsters on the Prowl
Moon Knight
Morlock 2001
Ms. Marvel
My Greatest Adventure
Mysterious Suspense
Mystery in Space
Naza
Neutro
New Teen Titans
Nick Fury, Agent of Shield
Nick Fury and His Agents of Shield
Night Force
Night Rider
Noman
Not Brand Ecch
Nova
Nukla
The Occult Files of Dr Spektor
Omac
Omega
Our Army at War
Our Fighting Forces
Outlaw Kid
The Owl
Peacemaker
Peter Parker, The Spectacular Spider-Man
Phantom (Gold Key/King)
Phantom (Charlton)
Phantom Stranger
The Phantom Zone
Phoenix
Planet of Vampires
Plastic Man
Plop
Police Action
Power Man (and Iron Fist)
Prez
Ragman
Raiders of the Lost Ark
Rawhide Kid
Red Sonja
Red Wolf
Reptilicus
Rima
Ringo Kid
Rip Hunter
Ripley's Believe It or Not
Rom
The Saga of the Swamp Thing
Sandman
Sarge Steel
Savage Combat Tales
Scorpion
Sea Devils
Secret Origins
Secret Six
Secret Society of Super Villains
Secrets of the Haunted House
Secrets of the Legion of Super-Heroes
Secrets of Sinister House
Sgt Fury and His Howling Commandos
Sgt Rock
Shade, the Changing Man
The Shadow (Archie)
The Shadow (DC)
Shanna the She-Devil
Shazam
She-Hulk
Sherlock Holmes
Shogun Warriors
Showcase
Silver Surfer (1)
Silver Surfer (2)
Sinister House of Secret Love
Six Million Dollar Man
Skull
Son of Satan
Son of Vulcan
Sorcery
Space Adventures (1)
Space Adventures (2)
Space Family Robinson
Space Man
Space 1999
Special Marvel Edition
Spectre
Spider-Man
Spider-Woman
The Spirit
Stalker
Starfire
Star Hunters
Starlord
Starslayer
Star Spangled War Stories
Star Trek (Gold Key)
Star Trek (Marvel)
Star Wars
Steel
Strange Adventures
Strange Sports Stories
Strange Tales
Sub-Mariner
Sugar and Spike
Superboy (1)
Superboy (2)
Superboy and the Legion of Super-Heroes
Super Cops
Super Friends
Supergirl
Super Green Beret
The Super Heroes
Superman
Superman Family
Supernatural Thrillers
Super Team Family
Super-Villain Team-Up
Swamp Thing
Sword of Sorcery
Tales of Asgard
Tales of Evil
Tales of Ghost Castle
Tales of Suspense
Tales of the Green Lantern Corps
Tales of the New Teen Titans
Tales to Astonish (1)
Tales to Astonish (2)
Targitt
Tarzan (Gold Key)
Tarzan (DC)
Tarzan (Marvel)
Tarzan Family
Team America
Teen Titans
Tex Dawson
Thor
Thrill O Rama
Thunder Agents
Thunderbolt
Tiger Girl
Tigerman
Time Bandits
Toka
Tomahawk
Tomb of Darkness
Tomb of Dracula
Tor
Tower of Shadows
Tragg and the Sky Gods
Trigger Twins
Turok, Son of Stone
The Twist
Two-Gun Kid
2001, A Space Odyssey
Uncanny Tales
Undersea Agent
Unearthly Spectaculars
Unexpected
Unknown Soldier
Untold Legend of the Batman
Vault of Evil
Vengeance Squad
Wanted
War is Hell
Warlock
Warlord
Weird Mystery Tales
Weird Suspense
Weird War Tales
Weird Western Tales
Weird Wonder Tales
Weird Worlds
Welcome Back Kotter
Werewolf
Werewolf by Night
Western Action
Western Gunfighters
Western Kid
Western Team-Up
What If
Wheelie and the Chopper Bunch
Where Creatures Roam
Where Monsters Dwell
Witching Hour
Wolverine
Wonder Woman
World of Krypton
Worlds Finest
Worlds Unknown
Wulf the Barbarian
Wyatt Earp
X Men
Yang

Appendix II: Our Favourite Comics

Dave Cutler:

- The Batman in Detective 471-476 by Englehart and Rogers
- Batman Spectacular 1978
- Blue Beetle and the Question in Blue Beetle 1-5 and Mysterious Suspense 1 by Ditko
- Captain America 247-255 by Stern and Byrne
- Daredevil 158-172 by McKenzie and Miller
- Manhunter in Detective 437-443 by Goodwin and Simonson
- Plastic Man in DC Special 15 by Cole
- Spider-Man 31-33 by Ditko
- The Spirit 1-12 (Harvey) by Eisner
- Swamp Thing 1-10 by Wein and Wrightson

Frank Plowright

- Avengers 56-60, 69-86, Annual 2 by Thomas and J & S Buscema
- Avengers 129-135, 137-144, 147-151, Giant Size 2-4 by Englehart
- The Batman in Detective 471-476 by Englehart and Rogers
- Blue Beetle and the Question in Blue Beetle 1-5 and Mysterious Suspense 1 by Ditko
- Justice League of America 100-114 by Wein and Dillin
- Secret Society of Super Villains 1-15, Spectacular by Conway and Rozakis
- The Spirit 1-33 (Warren and Kitchen Sink) by Eisner
- Teen Titans 33-43 by Haney, Cardy, Tuska and Saaf
- Tomb of Dracula 7-70 by Wolfman and Colan
- X-Men 97-105, 107-142 by Claremont, Cockrum and Byrne

Adrian Snowdon

- Avengers 129-135, 137-144, 147-149, Giant Size 2-4 by Englehart
- Captain Marvel 25-33 by Starlin
- Daredevil 108-112 by Gerber
- Daredevil 146-154 by Shooter, Kane, McKenzie and Colon
- Defenders 46-51 by Kraft
- Man-Thing in Fear 18 by Gerber
- Giant Size Man-Thing 4 by Gerber
- Spider-Man 121-150 by Conway
- Warlock in Strange Tales 178-181, Warlock 9-12 and Avengers Annual 7 by Starlin
- X-Men 129-137 by Claremont and Byrne

Steve Whitaker

- Adam Strange in Mystery in Space 53-91 by Fox and Infantino
- Aquaman 50-56 by Skeates, Aparo and Giordano
- The Batman in Detective 483-509 by O'Neil, Conway, Newton and Adkins
- Blue Beetle and the Question in Captain Atom 83-86, Blue Beetle 1-5 and Mysterious Suspense 1 by Ditko
- Doctor Strange 10-18 by Englehart and Colan
- Flash Gordon 1 4-6, 8, 11-12 by Goodwin, Ivie, Williamson and Crandall
- Hawkman in Brave and Bold 34-36 and 42-44 by Fox and Kubert
- Man-Thing 5-11, 12, 19-22, Giant Size 1 and 4 by Gerber
- The Vigilante in Adventure 417 and 422 and World's Finest 245-248 by Morrow
- X-Men 56-63, 65 by Thomas and Adams

Hassan Yusup

- The Batman in Detective 471-476 by Englehart and Rogers
- Doom Patrol 86-121 by Drake and Premiani
- Green Lantern and Green Arrow in Green Lantern 76-87, 89 by O'Neil and Adams
- The Legion of Super-Heroes in Adventures 346-380 by Shooter
- Manhunter in Detective 437-443 by Goodwin and Simonson
- The New Gods Trilogy in New Gods 1-12, Forever People 1-11, Mister Miracle 1-18 and Jimmy Olsen 133-139, 141-148 by Kirby
- The Shadow 1-4, 6 by O'Neil and Kaluta
- Swamp Thing 1-10 by Wein and Wrightson
- Warlock in Strange Tales 178-181 and Warlock 9-15 by Starlin
- X-Men 108-143 by Claremont and Byrne

Appendix III: Eagle Awards 1976-1980

Since their introduction in 1976 by Richard Burton and Mike Conroy, the annual Eagle awards voted for by British comic fans and presented at the yearly convention have become an integral part of fandom's year. Apart from 1978, there has been an initial nomination ballot, with the highest polling nominees winning a place on the final voting form. The following is a listing of the winners in the American comic section from 1976-1980. The figures after the winners are the number of votes polled.

1976

Favourite Comic Book Artist
- Neal Adams (106)
- John Buscema (83)
- Paul Gulacy (78)
- Jim Starlin (69)
- Barry Smith (60)
- Pass (14)

Favourite Comic Book: Humour
- Howard the Duck (312)
- Plastic Man (31)
- Plop (27)
- Pass (40)

Favourite B&W Comic: Humour
- Mad (178)
- Crazy (41)
- Cracked (26)
- Pass (165)

Favourite Comic Book Team
- X-Men (153)
- Avengers (117)
- Defenders (80)
- Pass (60)

Favourite Single Comic Story
- Howard the Duck 3, "Four Fethers of Death," Steve Gerber/John Buscema (111)
- Howard the Duck 1, "Howard the Barbarian," Steve Gerber/Frank Brunner (109)
- Fantastic Four 176, "Improbable as it may seem, the Impossible Man is back in Town," Roy Thomas/George Perez (97)
- Pass (93)

Favourite Comic Book Writer
- Roy Thomas (142)
- Steve Gerber (132)
- Steve Englehart (105
- Pass (31)

Favourite Comic Book: Dramatic
- X-Men (151)
- Warlock (124)
- Master of Kung-Fu (91)
- Pass (44)

Favourite B&W Comic: Dramatic
- Savage Sword of Conan (232)
- Marvel Preview (76)
- Doc Savage (59)
- Pass (43)

Favourite Comic Book Character
- Conan (141)
- Howard the Duck (114)
- Warlock (96)
- Pass (59)

Favourite New Comic Title
- Howard the Duck (194)
- Nova (91)
- Omega (85)
- Pass (40)

Favourite Continued Comic Story
- Master of Kung-Fu 48-51, Doug Moench/Paul Gulacy (137)
- X-Men 98-100, Chris Claremont/Dave Cockrum (109)
- Defenders 31-40, Annual 1, Steve Gerber/Sal Buscema (90)
- Pass (73)

Roll of Honour
- Stan Lee (195)
- Jim Steranko (85)
- Jack Kirby (75)
- Pass (55)

1977

Favourite Comic Book Artist
- Neal Adams (188)
- Jim Starlin (149)
- John Byrne (104)
- Marshall Rogers (97)
- Georgé Perez (72)

Favourite Comic Book: Dramatic
- X-Men (203)
- Detective (165)
- Conan (102)
- Avengers (98)
- Defenders (48)

Favourite B&W Magazine
- Savage Sword of Conan (230)
- Marvel Preview (155)
- Rampaging Hulk (111)
- Creepy (47)
- Eerie (43)

Favourite Character
- Batman (157)
- Warlock (150)
- Conan (114)
- Howard the Duck (108)
- Wolverine (84)

Favourite Team
- X-Men (221)
- Avengers (124)
- Fantastic Four (103)
- Justice Society (97)
- Defenders (68)

Favourite Single Comic Book Story
- Avengers Annual 7, "The Final Threat," Jim Starlin/Jim Starlin (210)
- Marvel Preview 11, "Starlord," Chris Claremont/John Byrne (146)
- Detective 472, "I Am The Batman," Steve Englehart/Marshall Rogers (92)
- Marvel Premiere 38, "The Lord of Tyndall's Quest," Doug Moench/Mike Ploog (64)
- Howard the Duck 16, "The Zen & Art of Comic Book Writing," Steve Gerber/Various Artists (61)

Favourite Comic Book Writer
Steve Englehart (192)
Steve Gerber (136)
Chris Claremont (132)
Roy Thomas (112)
Marv Wolfman (40)
Favourite Comic Book: Humour
Howard the Duck (374)
Mad (108)
Plastic Man (54)
Cracked (13)
Crazy (7)
Favourite Inker
Terry Austin (204)
Tom Palmer (123)
Ernie Chan (98)
Klaus Janson (83)
Joe Sinnott (66)
Favourite Supporting Character
Pip the Troll (139)
Vision (135)
Wolverine (119)
Beverly Switzler (97)
Impossible Man (81)
Favourite New Title
John Carter (173)
Rampaging Hulk (129)
Star Hunters (127)
Shade (75)
Star Wars (67)
Favourite Continued Comic Story
Avengers An 7/MTIO An 2,
Jim Starlin/Jim Starlin (192)
X-Men 105, 107, 108, Chris Claremont/
Dave Cockrum, John Byrne (118)
Defenders 46-50, Dave Kraft/Keith Giffen (112)
Detective 471-472 (108)
Star Wars 1-6, George Lucas,
Roy Thomas/Howie Chaykin (48)
Favourite Villain
Thanos (189)
Dr Doom (136)
Joker (102)
Scorpio (94)
Darkseid (69)
Roll of Honour
Steve Englehart (176)
Jack Kirby (118)
Jim Steranko (117)
Will Eisner (107)
Howard the Duck (69)

1978

Favourite Comic Book Artist
John Byrne (168)
Marshall Rogers (44)
George Perez (23)
Mike Golden (16)
Gene Colan (11)
Favourite Comic Book
X-Men (176)
Avengers (42)
Detective (24)
Tomb of Dracula (22)
Jonah Hex (13)
Favourite Comic Book Inker
Terry Austin (173)
Tom Palmer (32)
Bob Layton (24)
Klaus Janson (20)
Joe Sinnott (14)
Favourite Character
Batman (49)
Wolverine (41)
Howard the Duck (28)
Conan (25)
Spider-Man (18)
Dr Strange (18)
Favourite Team
X-Men (260)
Avengers (72)
Fantastic Four (21)
Defenders (18)
Legion of Super-Heroes (13)
Favourite Single Comic Book Story
X-Men 111, "Mindgames,"
Chris Claremont/John Byrne (13)
Avengers 178, "The Martyr Perplex,"
Steve Gerber/Carmine Infantino (12)
Superman VS Muhammed Ali,
Denny O'Neil/Neal Adams (11)
X-Men 109, "Home are the Heroes,"
Chris Claremont/John Byrne (11)
Avengers 177, "The Hope and the Slaughter,"
Jim Shooter/Dave Wenzel (11)
Favourite Comic Book Writer
Chris Claremont (157)
Steven Englehart (32)
Roy Thomas (31)
Steve Gerber (31)
Doug Moench (27)
Favourite Comic Magazine
Savage Sword of Conan (100)
Marvel Preview (75)
Rampaging Hulk (40)
Heavy Metal (34)
1984 (25)
Favourite Comic Book Cover
Master of Kung-Fu 67, Gulacy (22)
Detective 476, Rogers (18)
X-Men 114, Byrne (17)
X-Men 111, Cockrum (14)
X-Men 113, Byrne (12)
Favourite Supporting Character
Wolverine (70)
Beast (28)
Vision (19)
Nightcrawler (14)
Hawkeye (13)
Beverley Switzler (13)
Favourite New Title
Micronauts (102)
Spider-Woman (61)
DC Presents (27)
1984 (26)
Machine Man (22)

Favourite Continued Comic Story
Avengers 167, 168, 170-177, Jim Shooter/Perez, S. Buscema, Wenzel (77)
X-Men 111-113, Chris Claremont/John Byrne (62)
Detective 475-476, Steve Englehart/Marshall Rogers (46)
Thor 272-278, Roy Thomas/John Buscema (13)
Captain Marvel 58-62, Doug Moench/Pat Broderick (9)
X-Men 114-116, Chris Claremont/John Byrne (9)

Favourite Villain
Magneto (84)
Joker (59)
Dr Doom (47)
Michael/Korvac (29)
Dr Bong (11)
Death-Stalker (11)

Roll of Honour
Jack Kirby (45)
Will Eisner (30)
Seigel and Shuster (24)
Steve Gerber (23)
Superman (18)

1979

Favourite Comic Book Artist
John Byrne (277)
George Perez (99)
John Buscema (68)
Gene Colan (61)
Pass (37)

Favourite Comic Book
X-Men (297)
Avengers (110)
Master of Kung-Fu (78)
Pass (57)

Favourite Comic Book Inker
Terry Austin (221)
Bob Layton (127)
Tom Palmer (107)
Pass (87)

Favourite Character
Wolverine (200)
Batman (179)
Spider-Man (98)
Pass (65)

Favourite Team
X-Men (308)
Avengers (142)
Fantastic Four (53)
Pass (39)

Favourite Single Comic Book Story
Iron Man 128, "Demon in a Bottle," Michelinie, Layton/Romita Jr (240)
X-Men Annual 3, "A Fire in the Sky," Chris Claremont/George Perez (178)
Marvel Two-In-One 51, "Full House, Dragons High," Peter Gillis/Frank Miller (80)
Pass (44)

Favourite Comic Book Writer
Chris Claremont (257)
Doug Moench (128)
David Michelinie (97)
Pass (60)

Favourite Comic Magazine
Howard the Duck (175)
Savage Sword of Conan (165)
Marvel Preview (164)
Pass (38)

Favourite Comic Book Cover
Avengers 185, Perez (199)
Micronauts 7, Golden (161)
Iron Man 128, Romita Jr (147)
Pass (35)

Favourite Supporting Character
Beast (208)
Wolverine (197)
Vision (107)
Pass (30)

Favourite New Title
Howard the Duck (202)
Rom (185)
Time Warp (67)
Pass (88)

Favourite Continued Comic Story
X-Men 125-128, Chris Claremont/John Byrne (222)
Micronauts 1-12, Bill Mantlo/Mike Golden (170)
Marvel Two-In-One 53-58, Mark Gruenwald, Ralph Macchio/John Byrne, George Perez (119)
Pass (31)

Favourite Villain
Magneto (216)
Joker (163)
Arcade (138)
Pass (25)

Character Most Worthy of Own Title
Warlock (179)
Silver Surfer (178)
Killraven (137)
Pass (48)

Roll of Honour
Roy Thomas (176)
Will Eisner (108)
Seigel and Schuster (100)
Steve Gerber (97)
Pass (61)

1980

Favourite Comic Book Artist
John Byrne (45.6%)
Frank Miller (16.3%)
George Perez (12.3%)
Jim Starlin (4%)

Favourite Comic Book
X-Men (49.3%)
Daredevil (13.3%)
New Teen Titans (5.9%)
Master of Kung-Fu (5.1%)

Favourite Comic Book Inker
Terry Austin (55.2%)
Bob Layton (11%)
Klaus Janson (6.8%)
Gene Day (2.3%)

Favourite Character
Wolverine (21.5%)
Daredevil (9.1%)
Batman (7.1%)
Phoenix (7.1%)

Favourite Team
X-Men (65%)
New Teen Titans (11.4%)
Avengers (8.6%)
Fantastic Four (4.8%)

Favourite Single Comic Book Story
X-Men 137, "The Fate of the Phoenix,"
Chris Claremont/John Byrne (20%)
Daredevil 163, "Blind Alley,"
Roger McKenzie/Frank Miller (8.6%)
X-Men 138, "Elegy,"
Chris Claremont/John Byrne (4.8%)
Daredevil 164, "Expose,"
Roger McKenzie/Frank Miller (4.5%)

Favourite Comic Book Writer
Chris Claremont (49.3%)
Doug Moench (10.8%)
David Michelinie (9%)
Marv Wolfman (5.7%)

Favourite Comic Magazine
Epic Illustrated (25.2%)
Marvel Preview (18.7%)
Savage Sword of Conan (12.2%)
Heavy Metal (4.4%)
Howard the Duck (4.4%)

Favourite Comic Book Cover
X-Men 136, Byrne (9.6%)
X-Men 137, Byrne (6.3%)
X-Men 130, Byrne (6.3%)
X-Men 140, Byrne (4.8%)

Favourite Supporting Character
Wolverine (23.3%)
Beast (7.1%)
Nightcrawler (6.3%)
Bethany Cabe (4.2%)

Favourite New Title
New Teen Titans (33.4%)
Moon Knight (22.9%)
Epic Illustrated (7.6%)
Dazzler (4.8%)

Favourite Continued Comic Story
X-Men 135-137, Chris Claremont/John Byrne (23.4%)
X-Men 129-138, Chris Claremont/John Byrne (18.1%)
X-Men 129-134, Chris Claremont/John Byrne (11.1%)
Iron Man 131-133, David Michelini, Bob Layton/Jerry Bingham (3.2%)
Metamorphosis Odyssey, Jim Starlin (3.2%)

Favourite Villain
Magneto (18.8%)
Dr Doom (14.1%)
The Joker (7.3%)
Dark Phoenix (6.8%)

Character Most Worthy of Own Title
Silver Surfer (15.6%)
Wolverine (7.5%)
Warlock (6.5%)
Killraven (5.3%)

Roll of Honour
Jerry Seigel and Joe Schuster (7.5%)
John Byrne (6.5%)
Will Eisner (5.5%)
Chris Claremont (4.5%)
Phoenix (4.5%)

NB Votes were only given as percentages this year, not as totals.

CHRONIC COMMENTS

Don Martinec, who is often featured on these pages, wrote to ask Jim Korkis if the Fantastic Four special listed in the Marvel Bullpen Bulletins page sometime in 1967 was ever broadcast. Jim, a fine animation historian who, like Don, will appear in a future Chronicles, says, "No." He reports that the FF's only prime time appearance was as part of ABC's annual Saturday morning extravaganza, broadcast just prior to the start of that fall season.

And now for more of your letters.

—ROG

Dear Mitch:

Just received the first 4 Chronicles *en masse* and have been digesting them in a heady rush for nearly 24 hours. I'm pleased with the overall approach and execution of the series, with the exception of the fan art in the X-Men issue. The art in the latter three makes all the difference in the world. Byrne's centerspread of the FF and Golden's Avengers page, in particular, are genuine treasures. The humor pieces by Gilbert, Martinec, and Cavalieri were truly funny (not faint praise considering the feeble attempt in the latest *What If*) and Hembeck is, of course, always a caution. The interviews are revealing and the checklists are a welcome adjunct to the Marvel Indexes (though some of your writers could stand a closer look at the latter in preparing their articles).

Speaking of the articles, they have been a mixed bag, compared with the other features. Except for "X-Men Yet Not X-Men," "X-Men, Roth, and Thomas," (which was too brief), "The Devil and Wally Wood," and "The Justice League That Wasn't," I found most pieces to be, at best, simple rehashes and reprises (and not without errors as I implied above) with little in the way of new insights. At worst, some seemed simply irritating: specious and picayune criticism that represents fandom at its most narrow-minded, better suited to lettercols than fanzine essays.

Sandy Hausler's "Ups and Downs With The Uncanny X-Men" pole vaults to mind. This kind of panel-by-panel textural critique is so subjective as to be virtually worthless to anyone not sharing the critic's gut feelings.

Except for these complaints and a few other, more minor ones, the Chronicles series has much to recommend it. I look forward to future issues.

Bryan Allen
Charlottesville, VA

Bryan, I gave your entire letter (edited somewhat here) to Sandy. He, and I'm sure other contributors, appreciate the feedback.

ROG

Dear Sirs:

The centerspread in *Chronicles 2* by John Bryne is FANTASTIC! Is it available as a full-color poster? If it is not available, I hope that you or Mr. Bryne will consider producing the poster. I'm sure that there is a large market available. Please let me know if it is available, and its price.

Chuck Hoffman
St. Louis, MO

I called John Byrne, and he indicated that he had been involved in some discussions regarding the production of a poster, but nothing is definite, Chuck.

ROG

Mitch:

Hey, a fast l.o.c. on Dean Mullaney's l.o.c. on Chronicles #3. I didn't know Gene Colan ever worked on *Daredevil*—having only read one issue—but your reply to Dean was a good response. Now he'll write back and say something like, "Well, then, why didn't you put those comments in #3?" You can't please everyone.

L. Stephen Borer
St. Paul, MN

Actually, Stephen, I don't know that you can please anyone!

Mitch

Guys:

On a suggestion from a friend, I checked out your Chronicles series. I missed the X-Men Chronicles, unfortunately, but did get the FF, Daredevil, and Avengers. To say the least, I was quite impressed. The articles were interesting and informative, and the checklists wonderful. But, the artwork leaves MUCH to be desired!

The FF Chronicles: Oh, God, the artwork was HORRIBLE!! Who does John Lawless think he is? Lawless and Anderson's work was insulting and disgusting and should not have seen print. George Perez's page was great, as were the Byrne covers and centerspread. "In Final Defeat!" was great! Bravo, Don Martinec! Fred Hembeck, well, his work was great, as usual. I hoped and prayed that the Daredevil Chronicles would be better.

The Daredevil Chronicles: Well, I was right. It was better. The artwork was better, if not excellent (except for page 19, by Spain. Ugh.). I was disappointed not to find any Don Martinec, but was pleased with Michael Gilbert. Daredevil and Daredevil was hilarious. Hembeck was great.

The Avengers Chronicles: Martinec and Gilbert! Hallelujia! Bruce Fullers work was nice, too much Dave Simons, though. Hembeck? The usual. George Perez's cover was fantastic! The Mike Golden page was beautiful. What do Ghost Rider and Spider-Woman have to do with the Avengers? Try putting in characters that have something *to do* with the Avengers, not just people to put in to cover space.

All in all, a very nice series. I have yet to get the Spider-Man Chronicles, but rest assured, I will get it. If I may suggest for future issues: Captain America, Thor, Iron Man, and Dr. Strange.

John Hartwell
Bedford, TX

To Whom It May Concern:

I still am not sure if I like your publication, *FantaCo's Chronicles Series*, or not. When I first heard of the first issue, featuring the X-Men, I was certain it was another in the long line of products designed to milk us fans for all the money we had, and don't have. Obviously, anything having even the remotest thing to do with the X-Men would sell.

I did not buy the *Fantastic Four* or *Daredevil* issues either. Mainly because of what I feel is partially undue praise toward John Byrne and Frank Miller. I do believe that they are two of the best artists that Marvel has, along with being two of the best artists in comic books today, but the way that they are treated would put them on a par with Jack Kirby and John Buscema. I believe that if someone sold toilet paper (forgive my language) with stick people on it and said it was drawn by John Byrne or Miller, the paper would sell. I did not want to perpetuate that (besides, the fact that I was not exactly rolling in money did not help either).

So why did I buy this issue? I'm not sure. I like the Avengers, perhaps even moreso than the FF. Some of my favorite comic book stories have taken place in *The Avengers*, with nearly all of my personal favorite writers and artists doing the book at least once. (Also, the store at which I shop did not have any of the other fanzines I usually buy.) So, I bought your publication.

I like the Perez cover, except who colored it? Or, should I ask who crayoned it? The coloring is shoddy. I expect more, especially for a George Perez cover. If you cannot get a decent coloring job, do not even bother to print the cover.

I do not mind the cheap paper, personally I would rather have the cheap stuff and more pages than the glossy paper and less pages. The articles were very interesting (especially the Steve Englehart interview), but I wish you had used a bigger typeface. I doubt very seriously if anyone, short of the Vision himself, could read the whole magazine at one time. Even if it means not having as many articles, please try to do something to make the reading easier. (I'm going blind fast enough as it is.)

Except for the parody, Joey Cavalieri's 'Avengers Assembly,' and the illustration of Spider-Woman on page 54, the art was not bad. But, if you want to do a parody each issue do it along the lines of the old *Not Brand Ecchh* or *Crazy*, just because you are trying to be funny is not an excuse for lousy art. The listing of which characters appeared in what issues was not something to devote four pages to. The back cover art would have been much better for something of that sort. (Which would take it off the back cover where we would not have to put up with the crayoning again.) I understood the illustration of Ghost Rider (although it was a poor choice for that article, better an illustration of the Avengers fighting the Defenders or of the Sub-Mariner and the Hulk), but I could not understand Spider-Woman's being there at all. That would be like putting Spider-Man in the X-Men issue, maybe he did appear in the book but that does not make him an important part of their history.

Well, as I finish this up I am still not sure what to think. Granted, you do have a great deal of material here, but I still wonder if you are not out to make a quick buck. (I hope you aren't, fandom does

not need any more and I wish we could get rid of the ones we have already.) On one hand, Dean Mullaney has me wondering; on the other hand, I wonder when you are going to a magazine on the Justice Society of America.

Mike Sopp
Erie, PA

Mike, George Perez colored his wraparound cover for Chronicles 4. Nuff said?

—Mitch

Dear Editor:

I usually don't buy Marvel but one of the few of their books I do buy is *The Avengers*. It's good to know their very interesting history.

I've never bought any of your books before, but after this, I'm going to get every one of the Chronicles. I feel you have the ability to become one of the top comic groups. It will take a long time for you to equal DC and Marvel, but I don't think it would take long at all to beat out any or all the others.

Having different artists is an advantage because we can see their points of view on many different heroes.

I read every article except "Paperback Avengers." "The Mighty Assemblers" is the best thing in the whole magazine. I mostly like their battle cry "Assemblers Avenge!" There were too many puns in the story, just as in DC, *Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew*. The "Avengers Assemble" article was great because I was not yet alive when the Avengers first appeared. I didn't buy my first Avenger's until the issue where the Collector died. After that, I was hooked.

The Avenger's Checklist is very convenient. I can go there at any time to find out just about any information about any issue.

Douglas Morrissey
Waterford, NY

Dear Editor,

I thoroughly enjoyed Chronicles 4. I loved the Perez wraparound cover, but I must complain. The cover pictures everyone who is or was an Avenger, but Red Wolf, the Silver Surfer and Rick Jones were never full Avengers. They guest-starred, but that's all.

Why didn't you include a reprints list, as you did for the other three Chronicles? Why wasn't the Falcon on the back cover?

I enjoyed the "Never Walk Barefoot on the Pavement" and the interviews. The only thing I didn't enjoy was Dave Simons' drawing of the Vision on page 8.

Keep up the good work and do a feature on ROM sometime.

William Pattison
Colorado Springs, CO

George Perez was simply asked to do a cover, with the characters being his choice. I'm sure he knows that the characters you mentioned were not Avengers members.

As for the reprint checklist, we didn't have room!

—Mitch

Dear Mitch:

Now there is an alternative.

Yesterday, when someone wanted to know the full run of Marvel Comics characters, they had to buy George Olshevsky's Marvel Comics Indexes. Now we can get the full run, histories, even art from fan favorites, reviews, etc. and for a lower price yet.

Oh yeah, the fourth volume. I'm glad you pointed out that the Avengers are not a JLA ripoff. I hear too much of that nowadays. While there are many similarities, there are also major differences—the Avengers' "depleted roster" is one. Throughout the years, the JLA has managed to stick to the original team minus one (J'Onn J'Onnz), plus a lot.

On another tack, I loved George Perez's wraparound cover and I second Mad Mona's move to cover DC's line also.

Thanks again for being the best and only alternative.

Graham Wong
Astoria, NY

Thank you, Graham.

—Mitch

Dear Chroniclers,

I enjoyed your latest two installments in the Chronicles series—#4 and #5—the Avengers and Spider-Man. My only major complaint is that it seems you're placing less emphasis on interviews. Past issues of the Chronicles have contained interviews with past and present creative teams, writers, artists, editors, and editors-in-chief.

But these installments had only one interview apiece, and the one about the Avengers (Englehart) was with a guy who hasn't written the book in over 6 years! (Though I did find it very interesting to read Hembeck's Stern interview.) In the future I recommend that you try to get more interviews each ish. You could probably at least get Shooter each issue, or the current editor of a given series.

Also, when you place ads for contributors, I wish you'd give more advance warning than just a month or two. That seems too much short notice to research and write an article of professional calibre. Speaking of which, I can't stand it when you run articles that are nothing but plot summaries of existing stories (such as the Kree/Skrull War or Avengers/Defenders clash). It's really annoying when I've already read the stories, and I'd think any fan that cared would either already own the books in question, or at least have access to them.

Finally, most of your pro art is of very high calibre, and the fan art ranges from very good to very poor. In the future, I assume you'll be doing a New Teen Titans Chronicles, but I would also like to see Iron Man, Captain America, Justice League, Batman, and the Hulk. Contrary to what I've said above, I really do like the Chronicles series; it's just that there's some things which I don't like that I feel could be improved.

Barry Dutter
Scotch Plains, NJ

There was a Jim Shooter interview scheduled for Chronicles 4, in addition to the Englehart interview. The Shooter piece was done and paid for, but the editor-in-chief said that he preferred that it not be published in Chronicles #4.

—Mitch

The Chronicles featuring Spider-Man (#5) was scheduled to have a Bill Mantlo interview discussion, but the interviewer and interviewee never seemed to be able to hook up.

As for the plot summary pieces, there are a lot of younger readers who may not be familiar with the rich history that their favorite title has.

—Roger

Dear Roger:

Chronicles #5 is probably your best effort thus far (or, at least, my personal favorite) in this series. I especially enjoyed the article on the Steve Ditko years, but, unlike many fans, I don't care at all of ever seeing Spider-Man's original artist doing him again, and for simple reasonwer price yet.

We all saw what happened when Jack Kirby attempted *Captain America* again in the late 1970s. This became one of Marvel's worst selling titles, even though it was drawn/written by the man who originally did the character and made him such a hit in both the 1940s and the 1960s. But times change and also do artists' styles. Although he was bad for Cap now, he's great on *Captain Victory* and just fine on *The Eternals*. The same applies for *The Fantastic Four*. His one-hundred some issue run on this title will never be forgotten, but the words: "You can't go home again," run very true and I wouldn't want to see Kirby do the FF today for anything.

Philosophies change and vary as well over the years, and Ditko's *Spider-Man* issues were pre-anti-Viet Nam demonstrations (mostly) and his straight "black and white" themes hold little relevance with today's characters (such as The Ghost Rider, or The Phoenix) who are all several shades of gray. I think that Mr. Ditko must feel the same way as he refuses to try to recapture that which made him a legend and instead created new heroes and new stories. It's just a shame so many years of good art was wasted at Charlton, but perhaps we'll see the true excellence of his work now that he's doing new strips for Pacific Comics.

About the funniest thing I've seen in a long time was that silly full-page cartoon by Vezina of Spider-Man swinging thru the city singing the old cartoon show theme song! (What I wouldn't give to have that drawing poster-sized to hang on my wall—I think that summed up a lot of people's opinions of that old 1960's attempt at animation.) Incidentally, now that "Smilin' Ed" has been (hopefully temporarily) cancelled, perhaps we'll see a lot more of Vezina's work in the Chronicles series. Us fans of his expect it!

As for Aunt May, this poor old lady should have been killed off back in 1969 to keep us readers from being tortured to such things as her relationship and (almost) marriage to Doc Octopus, and several other near death dilemmas which bored us to death over the years. She was a great character of her time, but she was of Ditko's time and not Romita's, or Mooney's, or Romita Jr.'s. Peter Parker's grown up and May should grow older and eventually die, which brings up that old point of whatever happened to Marvel's way of killing off characters and keeping them dead? That's getting off the point a bit, but Marvel needs to stick to its guns before

they completely commercialize themselves into turning Marvel stories similiar to early 1960s DC style; they really seem to be going full circle.

That's all I have to say, except for "When is a Doctor Strange Chronicle coming out?"

David Puckett
Cave City, KY

Dear Chronatures:

Chronicles #5 was in my opinion, a great issue. Not only did it have a John Byrne front cover and Joe Staton back cover (by the way, I think Joe has come a *long* way from his E-Man art), it also has histories of the writer/ artist team-ups, stories on Spider-Man's life and loves, Fred Hembeck's great interview with my second favorite writer (nobody's better than B. Mantlo), a long-awaited centerspread by John Romita, and of course, the Spider-Man checklist. This is the first Chronicle I have bought, and I'm glad I did.

There's one thing I'd like to bring up. In the Hembeck interview, Rog said, and I quote, "...a lady called Annie Howell, who is romantically involved with Lance Bannon..." But in *Spider-Man #234*, Peter meets a lady known as Amy Powell.

All in all, I feel the *FCS #5* was the best magazine I've ever read and I can't wait for your annual.

Joey Like

Fred transcribed the interview from his cassette and I failed to catch the error. Oops!

—Rog

FantaCo Chronicles Series:

Again! The Spider-Man issue was terrific! Each issue in the series (have all five so far) gets better each time. Thanks for the larger print this time. The print in #4 was a strain on the eyes.

Noticed the ad for *FantaCo Chronicles Series Annual 1* (featuring *Two Decades of Comics*) on sale in September (my birth month). It will be like a birthday present to myself. This looks like a promising issue.

I like the idea of the Chronicles Series and hope some of the DC super-heroes will be considered. Of the five so far, I feel the Spider-Man is the best; next Daredevil, then Fantastic Four, X-Men and finally the Avengers (only because the print is so small.) I feel the series has great potential for the comic book buff.

The Chronicles would be ideal for Golden Age super-heroes. A few come to mind: All-Star Comics/ Justice Society of America; Fawcett's Captain Marvel books (Captain Marvel, Wow, Whiz, Master Comics); DC Golden Age titles (Flash, Sensation, Comic Cavalcade, Star Spangled, More Fun, Leading, All American).

I realize a particular title or character would have to be featured because of the wide scope of titles in the 1940s.

It well may be that your Chronicles series will be a limitless source of information.

Mad Mona Muneco
San Antonio, TX

Mad Mona, a most frequent correspondent with us and other comic-related publications, also suggested that we tackle some of the other titles of the '40s and '50s, such as Gleason Daredevil *and* Boy Comics. *Reader suggestions are always appreciated, so let's hear from fandom assembled; what do you want to see on these pages? Please let us know.*
—Rog

Dear Mitch:

I'd just like to say I'm enjoying your Chronicle series. And I'd like to ask if you are considering chronicling the DC line? Like Teen Titans, Legion, Warlord, and countless others. Even when you're done with that how about one on Cerebus or the Elfquest line. You've got hundreds of possibilities; what do you say?

Guy Brandwen
Kailua-Kona, HI

Dear Sirs:

The fifth issue of your Chronicles series on the history of Spider-Man was excellent. Especially loved the cover, inside cover, each and every article, the checklist, and the back cover. So what's or should I say who's up for number 6?

Delmo Walters Jr.
Bronx, NY

Well, Delmo, in line with what Guy was suggesting, we are going to do something a little different in the next issue: the Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers! We got great art, interviews, checklists, the whole package. We will be doing super-heroes in the future, but we don't want to get too predictable.
—Rog

Dear Chroniclers:

I recently received my *Spider-Man Chronicles* and I want to congratulate you on unbelievable mail service. I ordered it on a Friday and received it 4 days later! However, the magazine itself was so-so. The first couple of articles were very good but after that, it sort of went downhill. I loved the "Here's Johnny" article. I was glad to see somebody give Johnny the credit he deserves. The first article on Ditko was also very good because it told me a couple of things I never knew before. But the Thomas Fagan articles were atrocious. First, the sadistic Mr. Fagan wants to kill off the most wonderful character in Marvel's history, Aunt May, and then he ridicules all of Pete's romances. It sounds like he didn't even like the book in the first place. Those articles had no place in this magazine.

The Gerry Conway article was okay but Steve Webb also sort of ridicules the book. If all these writers would read the book for entertainment (which they are meant for in the first place) instead of searching for things to pick at, they'd enjoy it a lot more.

J. A. Fludd's Wolfman/Pollard interview was excellent. He reflected my exact feelings toward those issues he wrote about.

The Hembeck articles were a big mistake. Although I enjoy Hembeck's work a lot (I have all his books) anybody who knows Hembeck knows he's got some weird thing about Steve Ditko and hasn't really liked the book since Ditko left. The Roger Stern interview was entertaining until those last few lines. They were proof of Hembeck's Steve Ditko problem—after 200 issues he's still waiting for Ditko to come back even after Ditko returned to Marvel a couple of years ago and refused to have anything to do with Spider-Man. Poor guy... (I liked Ditko too but I liked Romita much better and thought Ditko was a bit overrated.)

Overall though, I guess I did enjoy the book as I have the past few Chronicles—I'm not even an X-Men fan and I enjoyed Chronicles #1—*The FF Chronicles* were excellent as were the *Daredevil Chronicles*—I don't care for the Avengers but I liked that issue too! So just keep them Chronicles comin'!

John Rigon
Woodhaven, NY

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